

LIGHT WEAPONS AND INTRASTATE CONFLICT

EARLY WARNING FACTORS AND PREVENTIVE ACTION

EDWARD J. LAURANCE

JULY 1998

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**A REPORT TO THE
CARNEGIE COMMISSION ON
PREVENTING DEADLY CONFLICT**

CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK

Carnegie Corporation of New York established the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict in May 1994 to address the looming threats to world peace of intergroup violence and to advance new ideas for the prevention and resolution of deadly conflict. The Commission is examining the principal causes of deadly ethnic, nationalist, and religious conflicts within and between states and the circumstances that foster or deter their outbreak. Taking a long-term, worldwide view of violent conflicts that are likely to emerge, the Commission seeks to determine the functional requirements of an effective system for preventing mass violence and to identify the ways in which such a system could be implemented. The Commission is also looking at the strengths and weaknesses of various international entities in conflict prevention and considering ways in which international organizations might contribute toward developing an effective international system of nonviolent problem solving.

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
1. INTRODUCTION	9
2. BACKGROUND, RECENT EXPERIENCE, AND THE BEGINNINGS OF INTERNATIONAL ACTION	13
Background, 13	
Codifying and Illustrating the Experience to Date, 20	
Modes of Acquisition, 22	
Case Studies, 26	
The International Community Swings into Action, 42	
Conclusion, 51	

3. CAUSES, EARLY WARNING, AND POLICY TOOLS FOR PREVENTIVE ACTION	53
Causes, 54	
Early Warning—Can It Be Applied to Weapons Flows and Buildups? 57	
Early Warning Indicators, 60	
The Way Forward, 62	
Specific Policy Actions, 68	
4. CONCLUSION	79
Principles, 79	
A Final Word, 82	
APPENDIX: THE WORK OF NGOs AND ACADEMICS	83
NGOs, 83	
Academic Work, 86	
NOTES AND REFERENCES	89
MEMBERS OF THE CARNEGIE COMMISSION ON PREVENTING DEADLY CONFLICT	95
MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL	96
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	98

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Much of what I learned about small arms and light weapons came from my experience in 1996-97 as consultant to the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms. I am grateful for that opportunity and indebted to Ambassador Mitsuro Donowaki of Japan, the chairman, and the fifteen other members of that panel for their cooperation and willingness to share their experience and expertise.

Since January 1998 I have been the administrator of the Preparatory Committee for a Global Campaign on Small Arms and Light Weapons (Prep Com), an Internet community of over 80 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and individuals addressing the problems associated with the proliferation, accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. In this role I have come to know and appreciate the vast knowledge, energy, and dedication of a growing community whose members often operate at great risk. Their work serves as a reminder that there is a way forward.

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Each day that I worked at the United Nations, I passed a wall in the park across the street from the UN with the following quote from the prophet Isaiah: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares. And their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war any more." These words, those of other prophets, and indeed the entire body of social teaching of the Catholic Christian church have provided me with the hope and faith that I needed in this and all of my work. I trust that the findings of this report can be useful to all who are called to prevent and stop the deadly conflicts that continue to rage in our world with intolerable loss of human life and security.

Monterey, California
July 1998

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IT HAS BECOME very commonplace to note the shift from interstate to intra-state conflict in the world—civil and ethnic wars—whose resolution seems to resist the best efforts of the international community. It is understandable that this international community continues to search for tools that could be used to prevent such conflicts. This search has produced a wide array of methods that focus on both the root causes of conflict—poverty, inequities, ethnic rivalries—and on finding the more short-term steps that will put an immediate stop to the outbreak and acceleration of armed conflict. This report breaks new ground in calling for a renewed focus on the actual tools of violence—small arms and light weapons—that are the means by which hundreds of thousands of people, mostly innocent civilians, are killed and wounded each year.

Preventing conflict by focusing on the tools of violence presents some obstacles for an international community still dominated by the ways of thinking about conflict prevention and practices that prevailed during

the Cold War. In the face of a fairly intractable ideological rivalry between the two blocs, a focus on the tools of violence proved disappointing in most cases. This is especially true for arms control measures involving major conventional weapons such as tanks, aircraft, and missiles. Currently, most conflicts do not involve this class of weapon. Instead, today's combatants employ light weapons such as automatic rifles, grenades, rocket launchers, and small mortars, all of which are portable, cost less, and are in such abundance that even the seldom successful methods of the Cold War are not applicable.

There are three basic arguments for focusing on these tools of violence. First, there is increasing evidence of the direct link between the availability of these weapons and the negative effects that all parties seek to prevent—deaths of innocent civilians, disruption of human development, and the militarization of society, which make addressing the root causes of conflict very difficult. In most cases fewer weapons mean fewer negative effects. Second, these weapons are the symbols of the power and repression that dominate today's conflicts. Third, the spread, accumulation, visibility, and misuse of these weapons can be addressed with concrete policies such as decommissioning, collection, monitoring, and control.

Arms flows and buildups play a critical role in the three types of conflict being waged around the world. The first type is major civil war and/or genocide such as seen in Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, and Somalia. The relatively small size of these conflicts will dictate more traditional approaches using light weapons, but the inability of state structures to provide basic human security presents a major challenge to conflict prevention. The second type is a postconflict situation such as in South Africa, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Tajikistan—where political stability is threatened by an increase in crime and frustration among the population. A third type of conflict concerns those countries in transition from authoritarian rule or centralized economies. In these cases the hardships that naturally accompany such transition are made worse by the armed violence associated with the increased availability of light weapons that find their way to those dissatisfied with the new economic and social situation.

The international community has begun to respond to the challenge of developing weapons-based policies to prevent and ameliorate conflict associated with light weapons.

At the global level:

- The United Nations has gained considerable experience in dealing with light weapons as part of peace operations, conducting official inquiries regarding the illicit acquisition of these weapons, and providing assistance to states suffering from the indiscriminate use of these weapons.

In 1997 it received a report from an experts panel on the nature and causes of the excessive and destabilizing accumulations and transfer of these weapons, which concluded with a number of recommendations for preventive action.

- In April 1998 over fifty countries, including the G-7 and Russia, signed a draft ECOSOC resolution calling on countries and the United Nations to adopt laws and a treaty aimed at curbing the illicit trade in arms.
- The success of the campaign to ban antipersonnel land mines, especially the award of the Nobel Peace Prize and the culmination of the effort in a treaty signed by over 120 states, has demonstrated that a weapon-specific focus can galvanize public and governmental support to alleviate human suffering and prevent conflict.

At the regional level:

- In June 1997 the European Union agreed to an EU Programme for Preventing and Combating Illicit Trafficking in Conventional Arms.
- In November 1997 the Organization of American States agreed to a Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials.
- The initiative of Mali to deal with its weapons problems has led to a proposed moratorium on the export, import, and manufacture of light weapons in West Africa.

At the national level, many countries have implemented a wide variety of programs to address the negative effects of the indiscriminate use of these weapons. These include programs to enhance border controls, improve registration and licensing procedures, improve security of weapons storage sites, and develop voluntary weapons collection and destruction programs.

NGOs have also been active, creating networks of scholars and activists; producing case studies of both effects and solutions; engaging in field-work that has resulted in the illumination of negative effects and illicit arms acquisition; hosting workshops that bring together governments, NGOs, and other elements of civil society; and actively lobbying supplier states to adopt laws and cooperate to reduce illicit trafficking in arms.

With the dominance of intrastate conflict, the peace operations designed to deal with it, and the refugees it has produced, the international community has begun to think seriously about and to begin developing early warning mechanisms to prevent conflict. Applying the early

warning process to light weapons flows and buildups will pose the following challenges:

- Governments are very sensitive to the revelation of human rights abuses associated with armed conflict. The topic of arms accumulations and flows is even more sensitive, especially since every state has the sovereign right to acquire arms to defend itself.
- Even with governmental cooperation, tracking arms buildups is made difficult by both the small size and low price of the weapons and the lack of transparency associated with their transfer and accumulation. Information gatherers may well find that delving into this type of information will be very dangerous.
- The nature of the behavior being uncovered and reported may present problems to the type of gatherer normally associated with current early warning efforts. Some effort will have to be made to develop some military expertise among the gatherers normally found in conflict zones.

Overcoming these obstacles seems worth the effort, especially since it is known that perpetrators of violence always precede their efforts with an arms buildup. And in most cases these buildups take enough time to allow for an early warning process to work. The following set of early warning indicators are presented for use in conflict prevention efforts:

- The location, collection, and disposition of arms collected in post-conflict peace operations need to be monitored and recorded.
- The post-Cold War era has been marked by the creation of an extensive surplus of small arms and light weapons. States have been very reluctant to destroy this surplus, choosing instead to export it, especially to zones of conflict. A closer monitoring of this surplus and its disposition would give very advanced warning of the arrival of excessive arms into a region or country.
- Most lists of early warning indicators mention external support as a key factor in the potential for escalation of conflict. External support from a country with extensive arms supply capacity and experience would be an early indication of arms supplies.
- Insecure arsenals, police stations, and other weapon storage facilities have been the source of weapons for participants in armed violence. A closer monitoring of these facilities, and especially any weapons thefts, could signal the start of an arms buildup designed to destabilize the country.

- By its nature corruption is difficult to monitor. But getting a handle on corruption among officials responsible for weapons security would give some warning as to illicit arms trafficking and destabilizing buildups.
- The monitoring of illicit commodities networks should also include watching for arms shipments, as the two are increasingly associated.
- Since so much of the trade in these weapons is illegal, monitoring black market prices of weapons can give a good indication of the magnitude and availability of supply.
- Unlike the weapons themselves, which can be produced in a conflict region or recirculated from existing surplus stocks in the region, ammunition for the most part must be mass produced using precision tools. It therefore is normally acquired from arms-producing states outside the region. Detection of excessive ammunition production and export would be a critical indicator of impending armed conflict, since no military operation can succeed without adequate ammunition supplies, despite adequate numbers of weapons.
- Monitoring borders between countries of warring factions could reveal an increase in weapons flows that would warn of an impending buildup.
- Violent attacks increasingly carried out with modern military weapons (e.g., hand grenades rather than homemade bombs) are an indicator that arms are very plentiful and destabilizing. The monitoring of the weapons used by gangs would also provide a warning as to the increased availability of military-style weapons.
- The increase in the legitimate acquisition of weapons by individual citizens is often a predictor of increased violence in a society, since many of these weapons become the target of centers of violence (gangs, drug dealers) seeking to acquire arms through theft.
- The potential for violence is often indicated by the sudden display in public of military-style weapons. The lethality of an assault rifle or a belt full of hand grenades is such that reducing its presence can significantly increase the potential for conflict prevention and control.
- Government programs that distribute weapons to citizens or paramilitary organizations are a good indicator that the potential for uncontrolled violence is increasing.
- Effective monitoring of the demobilization of former combatants and redundant military personnel will provide early warning of their dissatisfaction and likely return to the way of violence of their former profession.

The work of those dedicated to preventing and dampening the effects of conflict with light weapons will be enhanced by the use of early warning indicators. In addition, more needs to be done in the following ways to promote the transparency of information related to the production, acquisition, and proliferation of small arms and light weapons:

- An increase in information on the legitimate trade flow of arms is needed. Some types of weapon in this class could be added to the UN Register of Conventional Arms. A more effective approach is the development of regional arms registers.
- A second need is to make transparent the legitimate owners of weapons, which would allow authorities to concentrate on others who would be more likely to conduct armed violence.
- If arms flows themselves are too difficult to monitor, at least the manufacturers and the legitimate arms traders could be made public.
- A more controversial suggestion is to develop a system that registers a weapon with an international serial number upon manufacture, so that weapons can be traced to end users.
- Records should be established and made public for all weapons that have been seized, collected, and destroyed.
- Dealing with this problem could be helped if arms-producing states took steps to clarify which types of weapons are strictly for military or police work, as a precursor to establishing control mechanisms to restrict or prohibit ownership of such weapons by civilians.
- Finally, transparency remains critical, not only to publicize the suppliers of tools of violence but also the users. There should be no letup in the adverse publicity which increasingly accompanies the human carnage resulting from the use of these weapons. This publicity should include pictures of the weapons.

The report makes the following recommendations for specific actors in the international community:

- The UN must more directly address the role of disarmament in its peace-keeping operations, to avoid a repeat of previous inadequate weapons collections that have led to the circulation of hundreds of thousands of weapons in regions rife with the potential for armed conflict.

- The newly created UN Department for Disarmament and Arms Regulation should become more active in monitoring light weapons flows and buildups, and lead the way in developing weapons-based early warning mechanisms.
- International financial institutions should overcome the taboo against providing security assistance as part of development. Particularly important is support for the security of weapons in storage.
- Where applicable, regions and subregions should adopt the moratorium approach pioneered by West Africa.
- NGOs should continue to organize at the global level to provide a source of data and practical experience. Such a source will be needed by national governments and international organizations as they organize for a global effort on the effects of light weapons and a conflict prevention strategy based on the flows and accumulations of these weapons.
- NGOs should adapt to the critical role they can play in preventing conflict by enhancing their knowledge of light weapons and their effects and creatively integrating into their work the early warning indicators proposed in this report.

I

INTRODUCTION

WELL INTO THE POST-COLD WAR ERA, many aspects of international security remain familiar. The management of nuclear weapons stockpiles, operational and surplus, and the security of the Middle East and Europe still dominate the agendas of major powers. But these powers and, more important, middle-level powers and the developing world, find the security agenda increasingly concerned with intrastate conflict. Of the conflicts now raging across the globe, almost all are occurring within nation states but with a clear international element, in terms of causes, effects, and proposed solutions. Just as certain is that the belated effort to recognize the importance of these deadly intrastate conflicts and prevent them is well under way. The work of the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict parallels and codifies the growing efforts of nongovernmental organizations, national governments, and international organizations to “address the looming threats to world peace posed by intergroup violence and to advance ideas for the prevention of deadly conflict.”¹ The international

community has come to the conclusion that the mass violence of the post-Cold War challenges us “that we can surely do better” when it comes to prevention.²

One dimension of this effort to “do better” in preventing these conflicts is choosing a balance between addressing root causes and finding those “immediate operational steps to build a firebreak against the outbreak and spread of mass violence.”³ Until recently, studies of these conflicts, particularly in academia, focused on the long-term root or structural causes. More recently, the latter, more active, approach of developing operational tools has become the more normal in the policy community. Early warning, forums, transparency, developing conflict resolution skills, military and peacekeeping deployments, and sanctions are among the various approaches both on the table and in place.

In the past several years there has been increased attention paid to a new operational approach that focuses on the actual tools of violence that dominate these conflicts—those small arms and light weapons “that are actually killing people in the hundreds of thousands.”⁴ From the United Nations down to small villages and communities, citizens and organizations are beginning to demonstrate how “we can do better” by taking action to diminish the negative effects of the proliferation and accumulation of this class of weapon. The following are actions in progress:

- The success of the campaign to ban antipersonnel land mines—especially the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the campaign and its leader, as the culmination of a ten-year effort, has demonstrated that a weapons-specific focus can galvanize public and governmental support to alleviate human suffering. The campaign led to the signing of a treaty banning the export, acquisition, and use of this weapon by more than 120 countries. Canada’s foreign affairs minister, Lloyd Axworthy, one of the prime movers behind the campaign, has now openly asked the coalition of middle powers, peace groups, and international humanitarian nongovernmental organizations that made the land-mines treaty possible to take on the problem of the proliferation of small arms.⁵
- For several years the United Nations has addressed the issue, assisting some states in dealing with the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Most recently it put out a consensus report adopted by the UN General Assembly that clearly lays out the causes and consequences of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and puts forward a host of practical steps to deal with the problem.⁶ The authors of this report are experts on small arms, known collectively for the purposes of this exercise as the Small Arms Panel.

- Regional organizations such as the European Union (EU) and the Organization of American States (OAS) are adopting programs to combat the illicit trafficking in these weapons. They are taking as their starting point the linkage between excessive arms accumulation and the outbreak and exacerbation of armed conflict.
- In the developing world, states where the problems exist are taking actions on their own to include beefing up their laws, border surveillance, and collecting and destroying surplus weapons. (See “Regional Efforts” in chapter 2.)
- Nongovernmental organizations, fresh from the campaign to ban land mines, have begun to focus on the issue.⁷ More than 40 NGOs from over 50 countries have established the Preparatory Committee for a Global Campaign on Small Arms and Light Weapons (Prep Com). It is an Internet community of NGOs and individuals dedicated to preparing for a global campaign to alleviate the problems associated with the proliferation, accumulation, and misuse of small arms and light weapons. The website address is <http://www.prepcom.org>.

The purpose of this report is to lay the groundwork for action. It does so by outlining the types of conflict now creating the demand for small arms and light weapons, the nature of these weapons, and how they are acquired. The report discusses the negative effects of these weapons and what has been done to date to counteract them. It sets the future agenda for policy action.

A good place to start is to ask why the international community has been slow to focus on the actual tools of violence, the tools that bring meaning to the adjectives “deadly” and “mass” in defining conflict and destruction. First, even with weapons of greater magnitude such as missiles, tanks, and aircraft, focusing on the arms *per se* has always been problematic, lacking that definitive causal link between arms acquisition and conflict. A cursory look at the fairly young history of arms control and disarmament will show that the root causes of armed conflict (political, economic, ideological, etc.) are what dominate the work of academics and policymakers. Despite a significant amount of academic work focused on the causes of war, arms races, arms buildups, and offense versus defense, few verifiable theories have emerged that can identify the causal role of arms in a conflict. The literature is rich on arms acquisition, buildup, and employment, but treats them more as symptoms of conflict than as causes.

Those who have focused on arms control as a means of conflict prevention have been mainly concerned with weapons of mass destruction. But even here, the nuclear arms control debate was often divided between

those who felt that the weapons themselves were the cause of the conflict and those who focused on the intentions of the superpowers. As a result of the Gulf War some attention was paid to controlling the export of major conventional weapons, an implicit recognition that arms buildups are in some way related to the outbreak of conflict. But given the characteristics of small arms detailed in this report, developing policies around the acquisition and use of small arms and light weapons is inherently more challenging. This report will demonstrate that, like most public policy, actions focusing on smaller weapons are being pursued not as a result of empirically definable "causes" but rather as a result of an undeniable critical mass of "correlational" evidence. Civil society, NGOs, and governments are concluding that excessive arms proliferation and acquisition is unmistakably associated with negative societal and human effects, and have begun to address conflict prevention by focusing on the tools of violence.

A second obstacle to developing policy is the perception that this type of intrastate conflict involves killing with primitive and locally produced weapons and so is not susceptible to any of the extant arms control approaches. This, it is thought, would be true whether or not attention was paid to the role of weapons. In a sense, arms control during the Cold War had a definite technological focus that shaped policies.

Third, when attention is paid to the weapons, the perception is that there is an unlimited supply, that it is too late to do anything about the weapons. This report will demonstrate that there are effects and patterns of acquisition of this class of weapon that are discernible, and that there are early warning indicators that can be used to develop policy tools to prevent the outbreak and exacerbation of armed conflict.

This report follows the basic format of the general inquiry of the Carnegie Commission. First, the problem posed by the use of light weapons in intrastate conflicts is defined by expounding upon the effects of their use. Second, the question of why outside help is needed is addressed by delving into the global nature of the weapons problem. In order to structure the outside help in the form of policy tools, the report gives examples and develops a typology of early warning indicators related to weapons buildups that can lead to or exacerbate conflict. In chapter 3 of the report, policy tools are proposed for preventive action at the national, regional, and international level.

BACKGROUND, RECENT EXPERIENCE, AND THE BEGINNINGS OF INTERNATIONAL ACTION

POLICY PRESCRIPTIONS designed to prevent conflict must first be based on a realistic assessment of the root and operational causes of intrastate conflicts, to include the effects and consequences of the proliferation, acquisition, accumulation, and availability of the weapons used in these conflicts. Such an assessment reveals that the current environment is different from that which dominated the Cold War era, in terms of the nature of such conflict, and most important, the types and modes of acquisition of the weapons now used in this type of conflict.

BACKGROUND

Seven years after the end of the Gulf War, the international community has begun to deal more effectively with weapons of mass destruction. The discovery that Iraq was in the process of building a nuclear weapon applied

some shock therapy in support of those promoting international collaboration in nonproliferation. The Chemical Weapons Convention was signed and ratified by enough states to put it into effect as of April 1997. This progress had the effect of releasing the international community from some of the constraints of the Cold War, freeing it to focus more seriously on conventional weapons as a primary factor in conflict. As a result of the Gulf War, fought with major conventional weapons systems, the international community was forced to consider policies that sought to prevent the recurrence of this type of interstate violence. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms makes public on an annual basis the arms exports and imports of some 90 countries that participate; to date, this register includes all of the major exporters.⁸ Both efforts are preliminary attempts by the international community to develop transparency in the acquisition of weapons systems that can, with political will, be utilized to prevent conflict. The threat of interstate conflict with major conventional weapons remains important, as can be seen in the conflict still simmering between Iran and Iraq, the attempt by Iran to develop missile capabilities, and the continuing unstable situation on the Korean peninsula, to give several examples. But arguably the threat of interstate armed conflict has diminished significantly, as spending for such capabilities declines everywhere except in Asia. Even the often cited "arms race" in Asia is a pale imitation of the action-reaction cycle that dominated the Cold War era in the Middle East and other areas. Encouragingly, even in hot spots such as Cyprus where arms are currently building up, the transparency of the situation has given current peaceful conflict resolution techniques and preventive measures a much better chance of success than those in the past.

THE DOMINANCE OF INTRASTATE CONFLICT

The relative decline in the frequency and intensity of interstate conflicts has caused the world to focus more on the many intrastate armed conflicts that still exist, conflicts defined by insurgency, terrorism, and a heavy emphasis on the psychological aspects of warfare. For the purposes of this report, at least four different forms of armed violence using military weapons constitute the definition of intrastate conflict. They are classified as follows:⁹

- Random acts of violence by individuals or groups having no aspiration to the status of state, (e.g., criminality among rival gangs)
- Sporadic incidents of violence by organized groups seeking greater political participation, cultural autonomy, and economic benefits within the existing state structure

- Sustained resort to violence over long periods of time by organizations and movements with intent to supplant the existing governmental authority of the state over all or part of its territory
- Intense acts of extreme violence by groups operating within the context of the partial or complete breakdown of the state

The combatants in this type of warfare rely on being aggressive and mobile. The organizations doing the fighting are often nonmilitary in nature, with few traditional supply lines. The conflicts usually occur where the state cannot provide adequate security for its citizens. In such an environment, small arms and light weapons such as assault rifles, mortars, and grenade launchers are the weapon of choice.¹⁰

INTRASTATE CONFLICT AS A GLOBAL PROBLEM

Although conflicts occur within states, they are global in nature and require multilateral solutions for three reasons. First, the number of UN peace operations mounted to deal with these new conflicts has increased significantly. It is these operations that must face the consequences of this unchecked accumulation of small arms and light weapons on a daily basis, whether engaged in preventive diplomacy, in peacekeeping and peace enforcement, or in postconflict reconstruction. Such operations now include a disarmament element, the function of which is the creation of a more stable environment with fewer weapons in the hands of those who threaten the success of the operation. Second, the acquisition of these weapons often occurs across national boundaries; multilateral actions are often the only approach that can achieve success in counteracting these acquisitions. Third, a major cause of conflicts is the inability of affected states to cope with the influx of these weapons in their territory. The international community has a major and a traditional responsibility for capacity building. The United Nations, the World Bank, and other institutions have begun to respond to states who request assistance in dealing with these buildups of small arms if they occur, and with the collection and destruction of weapons in postconflict situations. Whereas in a previous era the focus was on arms held by specific "enemies," intrastate conflict often focuses on destabilizing arms accumulations in the society and state (e.g., central and southern Africa, the former Yugoslavia, Guatemala, and El Salvador). Such considerations provide the rationale and justification for outside help—help that up to this point is occurring in a context defined by few international norms regarding the acquisition, supply, and use of light weaponry.

THE WEAPONS

Small arms and light weapons are conventional weapons, in that they are not weapons of mass destruction. However, they have an additional set of characteristics that set them apart from major conventional weapons—characteristics that can play a part in developing the ways and means used to prevent their excessive accumulation.

Characteristics and Types

Weapons in this class are typically smaller, weigh less, cost less, and are more portable and less visible than major conventional weapons. This enhances the capability of nonstate groups and criminals to acquire and transfer them. It should also be noted that the lighter and smaller the weapon, the more likely it is that there are provisions for its legitimate use by citizens for personal security, for hunting, and for other culturally acceptable uses. These characteristics also affect disarmament and arms control measures. For example, the international community and the United Nations are attempting to use transparency as a tool to deal with the negative effects of excessive armaments (e.g., the UN Register of Conventional Arms). In the case of light weaponry, transparency is notably lacking for several reasons. Much of the traffic in these weapons is illicit, carried on by private firms and criminals to whom lack of transparency is critical for success. Additionally, legitimate trade has diminished to the point where competition is fierce, again creating few incentives for manufacturers, dealers, and governments to publicize their transactions, even if legal. Finally, the characteristics of this class of weapon noted above significantly enhance concealability.

In general weapons in this class do not require an extensive logistical and maintenance capability. Their prominence in current conflicts stems from the fact that these conflicts are waged by nonstate groups that require mobility and independence to achieve their objectives. These weapons are capable of being carried by an individual combatant, pack animal, or light vehicle. They are weapons normally assigned to infantry units operating on land. Training in the use of these weapons is less important than for major conventional weapons.

One exception to the above assessment related to logistics is the supply of ammunition. It is true that small-scale violence and banditry can be destabilizing even with small amounts of ammunition. However, many military operations endemic to intrastate conflicts require large amounts of reliable ammunition. The United Nations made special note of this situation in its recent report on small arms. "The availability of ammunition

is an important independent element, since weapons can be rendered useless without appropriate ammunition. The mass production of modern reliable and effective ammunition requires highly developed and precise industrial tools. It is assumed that all countries producing small arms (more than 70) and light weapons are also capable of manufacturing the relevant ammunition.¹¹ This exception has implications for early warning and policy action, discussed later in this report.

The report of the United Nations Small Arms Panel took these characteristics into account, as well as an assessment of the weapons actually being used in these conflicts,¹² to reach a consensus on a typology of weapons that should be the focus of policy (see table below).¹³

Unique Challenges in Addressing Problems Associated with Light Weaponry

Light weaponry presents some unique problems that make solutions more challenging than those devised for problems associated with weapons of mass destruction and major conventional weapons.

Types of Weapons Used in Current Intrastate Conflicts

Small arms

- Revolvers and self-loading pistols
- Rifles and carbines
- Submachine guns
- Assault rifles
- Light machine guns

Light weapons

- Heavy machine guns
- Handheld underbarrel and mounted grenade launchers
- Portable antiaircraft guns
- Portable antitank guns, recoilless rifles
- Portable launchers of antitank missile and rocket systems
- Portable launchers of antiaircraft missile systems
- Mortars of calibers up to less than 100-mm inclusive

Ammunition and explosives

- Cartridges (rounds) for small arms
- Shells and missiles for light weapons
- Mobile containers with missiles or shells for single-action antiaircraft and antitank systems
- Antipersonnel and antitank hand grenades
- Land mines¹⁴
- Explosives

First, in any conflict prevention effort, it is critical to recognize that there are underlying or root causes of intrastate conflict, regardless of the weapons involved. These causes typically include ethnic rivalries, discrimination, poverty, racism, terrorism, drug trafficking, and the collapse of state security institutions. In such an environment it is more difficult to link the accumulation of small arms and light weapons directly to the outbreak, conduct, exacerbation, and termination of conflict.

Second, most efforts at disarmament during the Cold War, and in the current era when the weapons concerned are major conventional weapons, always take into account the principles and purposes of the UN Charter, especially the right to self-defense, noninterference in the internal affairs of states, and the reaffirmation of the right of self-determination of all peoples. In the case of light weapons, these principles are more sensitive since intrastate conflict is most often within a state's jurisdiction, or at least its geographic boundaries. In many states experiencing these conflict situations, citizens can legitimately own and use small arms for personal security. The line between crime and warfare is often blurred.

Third, solving the problems associated with light weapons—killing of women and children, disruption of economic development, terrorism, and so forth—requires going beyond traditional arms control approaches. Solutions will require a broader scope of policy options involving such areas as development, human rights, refugees, judicial systems, and police work. And the search must go beyond the supply side solutions that have dominated the ways and means of dealing with security problems created by weapons of mass destruction and major conventional weapons.

Fourth, dealing with this issue is also more challenging because light weaponry is found in the inventory of every state's legitimate armed forces and in some cases of the police as well. Pistols, rifles, automatic weapons, hand grenades, and the like are manufactured for military purposes and are the mainstay of every army in the world. They are every state's primary tool in providing for its security. The possession of nuclear weapons and major conventional weapons is justified by owner-states as legitimate tools of self-defense. However, not every state possesses weapons in these two categories. The international community and the United Nations have consistently acted to limit possession of weapons of mass destruction to levels that ensure security at the lowest level of armaments. Small arms and light weapons are present in every state, and every state participates in the legitimate trade in these weapons as a supplier or recipient. Although there is a body of international humanitarian law relating to the use of light weaponry, there exist few international norms against possession itself. As a result, finding the ways and means to prevent the negative consequences resulting from this class of weapon is more challenging.

Increased Availability of Weapons

During the Cold War, many countries manufactured small arms and light weapons. But their proliferation and availability were seriously attenuated by superpower control and competition. These weapons have now become much more available to groups and individuals who have succeeded in using them to start and wage wars and to destabilize legitimate governments and social systems. One source is the very manufacturers set up during the Cold War, who are now free to supply the highest bidder. Another is the surplus of large amounts of new and used light weapons from the inventories of the major military powers. This surplus has been created by lower defense budgets and lower levels of forces armed with such weapons. Additionally, some newly independent states with a large surplus of light weapons experienced a short-term collapse of their export control systems, resulting in an outflow of the weapons to regions of conflict. Ironically, many of these weapons found their way onto the open market as a result of incomplete disarmament mechanisms that were part of the otherwise successful resolution of several major conflicts in Central America (e.g., El Salvador) and Africa (Mozambique).

This availability coincides with the aforementioned presence of intrastate conflicts in many parts of the world, and a concurrent loss of interest in and control over these conflicts by major powers. The global surplus of light weapons, whose export is much more susceptible to the control of and covert supply by private parties, has had little difficulty finding its way into these zones of ethnic and intrastate conflict.

The problem is further exacerbated by an additional development, that of illicit networks developed for drugs and laundered money, that have been adapted to the illicit trade in light weapons. In general, more and more groups rely on violence due to the increased availability of weapons. The sheer number of actors who owe their existence to the possession and use of these weapons makes any attempt at solutions very challenging. Finally, this spiral of weapon accumulation and violence has the tragic consequence of creating fear among previously secure populations, who often respond by acquiring small arms for their personal protection and security. "Perhaps most grievously, we see a vicious circle in that insecurity leads to a higher demand for weapons, that itself breeds still greater insecurity, and so on."¹⁵ In such an environment, where supply is often unlimited, there is a need for conflict prevention to focus on the demand side of the equation created by the vicious spiral of insecurity. Most of the traditional ways of preventing arms buildups from escalating into conflict, such as supplier cartels, export controls, transparency, etc., have so far done little in the face of these new modes of acquisition.

CODIFYING AND ILLUSTRATING THE EXPERIENCE TO DATE

There are no globally agreed norms or standards that can be used to determine the levels at which accumulations of this class of weapon could be considered excessive and destabilizing.

DEFINING EXCESSIVE AND DESTABILIZING ACCUMULATIONS OF LIGHT WEAPONS

This lack of norms distinguishes light weapons from weapons of mass destruction or even major conventional weapons such as surface to surface missiles and aggravates the obvious methodological difficulties in determining levels at which light weapons are excessive. Despite this, the task cannot be avoided since it lies at the heart of policy action. Stopping arms buildups that are benign or positive in their impact is counterproductive, yet the widespread failure to respond to buildups that contribute to the outbreak and exacerbation of conflict is the very problem to be solved. In the case of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms developed in 1991, the architects of the register recognized this dilemma by assigning the definitional task to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Two years of debate in 1993 and 1994 resulted in a predictable lack of consensus on a definition.

The terms “excessive” and “destabilizing” are relative and exist only in specific contexts. The mere accumulation of weapons is not a sufficient criterion to define an accumulation of weapons as excessive or destabilizing, since large numbers of weapons that are under the strict and effective control of a responsible government do not necessarily lead to violence. Conversely, a small number of weapons can be destabilizing given the right circumstances.

The UN Small Arms Panel debated this very point for a year, concluding in their recent report that accumulations of small arms and light weapons become excessive and destabilizing in the following circumstances:

- When a state, whether a supplier or recipient, does not exercise restraint in the production, transfer, and acquisition of such weapons beyond those needed for legitimate national and collective defense and internal security;
- When a state, whether a supplier or recipient, cannot exercise effective control in preventing the illegitimate acquisition, transfer, transit, or circulation of such weapons;

- When the use of such weapons manifests itself in armed conflict, in crime—such as arms and drug trafficking—or in other actions contrary to the norms of national or international law.¹⁶

Of these three aspects of the definition, the first two will be naturally more difficult to determine in practice, both empirically and politically, although later in this report they will be part of a discussion of early warning and policy measures. Defining “legitimate national and collective defense and internal security” has dogged security specialists since the beginning of time. The question of “illegitimate acquisition, transfer, transit, or circulation” is somewhat easier to define, but the loosening up of the post-Cold War arms trading system has made this more difficult as well. It is from the third category that the international community stands the best chance of deriving indicators that an excessive and destabilizing accumulation has occurred. This is problematic for some who will view this as “too little, too late.” But the reality is that in most cases accumulations of weapons cannot be classified as excessive or destabilizing until some of the negative effects begin to manifest themselves in crime, armed violence, and other effects described below.¹⁷

THE EFFECTS OF EXCESSIVE AND DESTABILIZING ACCUMULATIONS OF LIGHT WEAPONS

First, the increase in the use of light weaponry increases the destructiveness and lethality of conflicts. Individuals and groups who politically disagree more easily resort to violence instead of resolving conflicts peacefully. Large accumulations of light weapons, especially assault rifles and hand grenades, increase the lethality of conflict when compared to less capable weapons such as handguns and knives. This leads to greater numbers of civilian casualties and refugees, which overwhelm health care systems and in general disrupt the economic, social, and political development of the country.

The second basic effect is the increase in criminal or nonpolitical acts committed with these military style weapons—armed robberies, hijacking, terrorism, stealing of livestock, drug trading, and smuggling. The criminal elements in a state are in some cases better armed, in quantity and/or quality, than the legitimate security forces of the state. Availability of such weapons also enhances the proliferation of agents of violence, including drug dealers and criminal gangs. Rival groups within a state race to maintain an inventory of equally capable equipment.

Third, the level of violence promoted by these weapons is so high that it forces citizens to arms themselves, either personally or through pri-

vate nongovernmental security organizations. Additionally, the availability and use of military style weapons emboldens the disaffected in many parts of the world. Faced with little or no economic or social development, desperate citizens opt for acquiring a weapon for individual survival, adequate living standards, or for commercial purposes. The end result is an overall increase in the number of weapons in the society.

Finally, the increase in the availability and use of this class of weapon increases the threat to peace building. Recently reformed or reconstituted security forces in states making the transition to democracy revert to repression when faced with increased criminal activity or intrastate violence. It becomes more difficult to conduct development projects and programs, leading to a decline in economic aid from donors who question how their funds can achieve goals in a violent environment. Even when a United Nations peacekeeping operation is successful, the postconflict reconstruction process is imperiled by violence with this class of weapon. Eliminating the root causes of the violence would require socioeconomic development, effective democracy, and a credible law and order system, but these developments take time and are harder to maintain in an environment of indiscriminate access to the tools of violence.¹⁸

MODES OF ACQUISITION

One of the main arguments of this report is that addressing the negative consequences of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons requires taking into account several new dimensions of the conflicts to be dealt with. To this point the analysis has included a new emphasis on understanding the dynamics of intrastate conflict waged with a class of weapon—small arms and light weapons—that confront policymakers with a set of challenges different from those of the Cold War period. To these new dimensions we now add the reality that the variety of modes for acquiring these weapons is much greater now, requiring further adjustments in the thinking of those who would diminish conflict by focusing on the weapons themselves.¹⁹

In general, the Cold War arms trading system was more tightly controlled than the one that exists today, especially in the case of small arms and light weapons. Certainly small arms and light weapons were produced in great quantities. And they were used extensively in the intrastate conflicts that existed during that era (e.g., Afghanistan, Vietnam, Central America, and Angola). Supplying nonstate actors was a dominant feature of this system, as the superpowers and their allies supplied their clients in

pursuit of political and ideological goals. But at least in the case of the initial production and transfer of these weapons to states and nonstate actors, governments controlled the production and export. It is also true that even during the Cold War, the control of these weapons was not perfect, especially for weapons sent to nonstate actors. Although not much was accomplished in the way of multilateral arms control during the Cold War, even for major conventional arms, a great deal of arms control occurred unilaterally, through export denials, and so forth.

Legal trade of weapons in this class has not disappeared. It is still true that “much of the supply and acquisition of small arms and light weapons is legitimate trade that occurs among governments or among legal entities authorized by governments.”²⁰

Countries that manufacture small arms and light weapons continue to export them legitimately, along with their surplus of used weapons. As a result they continue to be imported legally by countries in regions of conflict—legal being defined as any transfer that is not “contrary to the laws of states and/or international law.”²¹ This takes place as a grant (aid), particularly when a large army is decreasing in size and wishes to export its surplus weapons. Government to government sales can take place as well, but the dominant mode of legitimate transfer is the commercial sale. The transfer is normally controlled under national procedures in both the supplier and recipient state, through export licenses and end-user certificates.

Another variant of legitimate transfer has implications for the destabilization of a society. This occurs when a government, to bolster its own security and political power, arms subnational groups that support its political or social policies and act as a supplement to government security forces. This often takes the form of arming “self-defense” forces or liberalizing arms acquisition procedures for individual citizens. Both types of holder can end up retaining the weapons when the need for such forces or possession diminishes, especially at the end of a peace process. This has occurred in many places, including South Africa, Mozambique, Colombia, and Guatemala. Attempts to register surplus weapons in a postconflict phase can be complicated by such transfers and distribution.

CHANGES SINCE THE END OF THE COLD WAR

But several major changes have taken place since the Cold War ended that result in much of the trade in this class of weapon not conforming to the above definitions of legal trade. First, much less of the current trade is in newly produced weapons. Despite the fact that many countries are capable

of producing light weaponry, thanks to the diffusion of arms-producing technology during the Cold War, overall production of small arms and light weapons has declined significantly since the end of the Cold War. One reason for this is that much of the Cold War supply of small arms and light weapons has remained in the regions where these conflicts were fought, creating a surplus pool to be recirculated and diffused into society. "One factor bearing on the availability, circulation, and accumulation of these weapons in many areas of conflict is their earlier supply by Cold War opponents."²² Additionally, producing states outside the regions of intrastate conflict have less need for the weapons in their arsenals, and as they have down-sized their armed forces, economic necessity forces them to export the surplus, not new production. In determining that a majority of the small arms and light weapons being used in conflicts dealt with by the United Nations are not newly produced, the UN Small Arms Panel cited the case of the production of assault rifles for the years between 1945 and 1990.²³ (See Table 2.1)

A second major change in the post-Cold War arms trading system is the relative rise in illicit or illegal trade. As previously mentioned, this phenomenon is enhanced by the very characteristics of the class of weapon now dominating the world's armed conflicts, that is, light, portable, inexpensive, easily concealed, and so forth.

The first type of illicit acquisition is the covert or secret transfer of arms to a government or nonstate actor from another government. This mode is less prevalent in the post-Cold War period but continues to be an option for those states supporting separatist forces outside their borders. It is proving to be a serious sticking point in the many attempts to prevent conflict through the control of arms. The UN Small Arms Panel wrestled with this problem for a year, concluding that "such transfers are not nec-

Table 2.1. Manufacture and Use of Assault Rifles, 1945–90

Name	Countries using	Countries manufacturing	Manufactured (millions)
FN FAL family	94	15	5–7
AK family	78	14 +	35–50
M-16 family	67	7	8
H&K G3 family	64 +	18	7 +

Source: Virginia Hart Ezell. *Report on International Small Arms Production and Proliferation* (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Research on Small Arms in International Security, March 1995).

essarily illicit."²⁴ Since this panel represented the international community and was operating on a consensus basis, its conclusion on this point helped clarify the difficulties involved in defining what is illicit, never mind enforcing it. Major powers involved in peace operations, for example, are searching for a consensus that such transfers are always illegal, as a way of achieving the control over the flow of arms that they feel is critical to conflict resolution. But this contradicts the reality that many states do not conform to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. In 1995 the United Nations reached a consensus on the principles that find their way into every international effort to deal with arms and conflict. However, the *de facto* conclusion, held by many states in regions of conflict, is that arms can be sent to groups opposing governments that do not meet the UN criteria. It is of course left open as to how and by whom such a determination is to be made. The relevant passage in the document resulting from the consensus reads as follows:

States should respect the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, including the right to self-defense . . . and should continue to reaffirm the right of self-determination of all peoples, taking into account the particular situation of peoples under colonial or other forms of alien domination or foreign occupation, and recognize the right of peoples to take legitimate action in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations to realize their inalienable right to self-determination.²⁵

The panel did add language that probably represents the limit to which this issue can be taken at this point. "Any transfer not approved by competent authorities in the recipient state could, however, be classified by that state as interference in its internal affairs."²⁶

A second variant of illicit transfer is the black market. As United Nations arms embargoes have increased, and more and more conflicts involve nonstate groups, black market suppliers have become the only source of arms for countries under embargo. Additionally, underground political organizations, and criminal organizations such as drug cartels, are also forced to rely on this means of acquisition. The portability, low cost, and concealability of small arms and light weapons make this mode of acquisition and transfer particularly effective.

A third variant is illicit in-country circulation. One of the major differences between this class of weapon and major conventional weapons is the fact that a significant amount of the supply is already in the region and sometimes in the country where it is in the greatest demand. It is more feasible, economically, militarily, and politically, to obtain the needed weapons without complicated export and import procedures. In many cases cross-border acquisitions are not required. The first such type of acquisition

is theft from government arsenals. As one example, a recent South African government study revealed that more than 10,000 weapons had been stolen from the police, army, and legal self-defense forces since 1990. The Albanian situation, discussed later in this report, is an even more telling example. In many of the conflicts dealt with by the United Nations, arsenals and police stations are often targets for the forces of the opposition. Further, theft from citizens armed with military-style weapons has added to the inventory of groups and criminals destabilizing society. A second type of in-country acquisition arises from the fluid nature of conflicts typical of today's world. This insures that ambushes and other tactics will be employed for the purpose of seizing weapons from opponents. In the conflict in El Salvador, both sides had significant quantities of weapons originally supplied to the other. Third, it is now common for subnational groups to conduct mutual arms deals. This was widespread in the case of the conflict in Liberia, where several groups were armed by those already participating in the conflict. Fourth, arms transfers can take place between subnational groups and criminal organizations, especially when the former are used by the latter to protect their illegal activities. A fifth mode can be termed the leaking pipeline. While one or more of the above modes of acquisition is being employed, weapons are siphoned off by either government officials or subnational groups.

CASE STUDIES

The following case studies illustrate how these types of weapons, and their modes of acquisition, lead to the negative consequences whose prevention is the focus of this report.

Conflicts in which small arms and light weapons play a significant role can be usefully categorized in three types.²⁷ The first is civil war and/or genocide, where often ethnic differences determine the actions of the government, the military, and the population. Genocide or mass murders are often the result of the massive influx of small arms and light weapons, as is the destruction of the political system and the move toward anarchy and chaos. Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, and Somalia are such types of conflict. The second type of case is the postconflict situation, where political stability is threatened by an increase in crime and frustration among the population that could lead to the resumption of the armed conflict. El Salvador and South Africa are two countries that are currently seeing this type of violence due in part to small arms and light weapons proliferation. The third type of conflict concerns those countries that are in the process of tran-

sition from authoritarian rule and centralized economic systems to democracy and a free market system. In these cases the hardships that naturally accompany such transition are made worse by armed violence and instability made possible by the accumulation of small arms and light weapons in the hands of those dissatisfied and frustrated with the new political and economic situation. As in the second type, the danger is that such violence will coalesce around rival groups and escalate into a civil war based on political goals.

TYPE 1: CIVIL WAR AND GENOCIDE

We look first at genocidal conflict.

Rwanda and the Great Lakes Region of Africa

The armed conflict and genocide in this region has occurred in four phases, all of which were greatly affected by the magnitude and manner of supply of small arms and light weapons.

The first phase of violence in the 1990s began with the invasion of Rwanda from Uganda by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in October 1990, and ended with the Arusha Peace Accords in August 1993. The majority of the soldiers in the attacking RPF were of the Tutsi ethnic group who had long been living in Uganda after being driven from Rwanda by the Hutu. The Hutu government of Rwanda used the RPF invasion to crack down on the Tutsi population. The government successfully repelled the RPF invasion by November 1990 but not before 500 people died, and 350,000 refugees were displaced by the fighting. Throughout the early 1990s the RPF was supported by the Ugandan government and army forces, who provided predominantly Soviet-made weapons. Uganda's government and President Yoweri Museveni have repeatedly denied this claim, stating that the rebels in fact stole the weapons from government caches. However, it is now known that Uganda provided the RPF invaders with "an array of small arms and other weapon systems, including recoilless cannons and Soviet-made Katyusha multiple rocket launchers."²⁸ The Rwandan government was supplied with Belgian- and German-made light weapons and with Kalashnikov automatic rifles from China and the former Eastern Bloc. However, as a result of the RPF invasion, the army was forced to expand its size from 5,000 to 30,000 troops, along with its weapon capabilities. France, Egypt, and South Africa were the major suppliers to Rwanda during the buildup after the first RPF invasion. The multimillion dollar acquisition comprised the full range of light weapons, including assault rifles,

mortars, rocket launchers, and grenades.²⁹ Many observers have documented this classic arms race.

There were several cease-fires during this period, one of which the RPF violated in February 1993. This prompted the Hutu-dominated Rwandan government to commit even more violence against Tutsi and receive more arms from its benefactor and supporter, France. "In the face of the renewed war and buildup of arms, the Rwandan government's abuses, a collapsing economy, and the crushing burden of feeding the displaced (now one million), the donor nations redoubled their efforts to end the conflict."³⁰ The result was the signing of the Arusha Accords of 4 August 1993, ending the first phase of this conflict.

And just as quickly, it signaled the beginning of the second phase, as the Hutu government of Rwanda began to prepare for the final showdown with the RPF and the Tutsi minority population. The first triggering event was the assassination of the newly elected Hutu president in Burundi by extremist Tutsi soldiers. Both sides in Rwanda saw this as a sign that power sharing would not work, and both began to increase their arms inventories. In the case of the Hutu government, this included the distribution of automatic weapons and other light weapons to self-defense forces. The predictable leakage of these weapons into society meant that these weapons became available to the average Hutu citizen, not just those in formal militias. Further, the ultimate purpose of this distribution of arms was clear to all. A Rwandan military officer assigned to train militias during this period defected to the commander of the UN force, having "decided he could no longer participate, given that their real purpose was to kill Tutsi rather than to oppose an RPF advance. . . . He informed the UN commander that "militia groups stationed throughout the capital city would be able to kill 1,000 Tutsi every twenty minutes."³¹

Meanwhile, the UN peacekeeping force dispatched to oversee the Arusha Accords was struggling to deal with the arms problem. Given the well documented role of arms buildups in this conflict, an attempt was made to develop a United Nations Security Council mandate for this force that would deal with the problem. Early versions of the mandate for the force being assembled provided that the force would "assist in tracking of arms caches and neutralization of armed gangs throughout the country" and would "assist in the recovery of all weapons distributed to, or illegally acquired by, the civilians." In the final mandate the provisions were completely eliminated. The final version included only the simple mandate to "investigate and report on incidents regarding the activities of the gendarmerie and police."³² This weak mandate would contribute significantly to the genocide that would occur in 1994. The UN observed and reported the continuing shipment of arms into Rwanda during this period, and asked for more troops. On all counts the answer was no.

The third phase, the genocidal killing of Tutsi by Hutu, and the victory of the Tutsi RPF, began with the death of the Rwandan Hutu president in a plane crash on 6 April 1994. Most of the foreigners left at this point, resulting in an even greater distribution of arms. The results are well known. Before the RPF succeeded in driving the Hutu government and hundreds of thousands of Hutu into exile in Zaire and Tanzania, over 500,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu had been slaughtered. "While it is true that much of the killing of unarmed civilians was conducted with machetes and other crude weapons, guns were used to execute leaders of the Tutsi community and whenever there was resistance to Hutu violence."³³ "The huge piles of Tutsi bodies massacred in Rwanda since April (1994) are now juxtaposed with the huge piles of rifles in Goma, Zaire, that were confiscated from fleeing Hutu. . . . One example is sufficient to demonstrate the impact of small arms in the hands of those capable of crimes against humanity: Human Rights Watch/Africa reports that 2,800 people gathered in a church were slaughtered by militiamen using automatic rifles, machine guns, grenades, and machetes. As people fled, it took the militia four hours to kill them all."³⁴

The fourth phase of the conflict started when the armed Hutu who fled into refugee camps in Zaire and Tanzania began to consolidate and rearm for the purpose of conducting armed raids into Rwanda and Burundi. The response of the international community was threefold. First, in May 1994, the Security Council voted (Resolution 918) to embargo the sale or supply of arms and related materiel to Rwanda by states or their nationals. In the second phase, the international NGO community and the media began to assume a major role in reporting to the world, since the UN and other official presence had diminished significantly in the wake of the genocide. These NGOs began to produce reports of the rearming of the former Rwandan (Hutu) army that had conducted the 1994 genocide within Rwanda. Of these reports, the Human Rights Watch Arms Project produced one of the most important, which after four months of field research documented arms being supplied by France, Zaire, South Africa, and China.³⁵ These and other media reports³⁶ caused the United Nations Security Council to expand the 1994 embargo on Rwanda to include the Hutu camps in neighboring countries in resolution 997, dated 9 June 1995. Additionally, in June 1995 UN envoy Aldo Ajello of Italy met with the leaders of Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zaire in an effort to stop the armed violence. The secretary-general's report of these meetings "emphasized the Security Council's great concern over increasing reports of military activities that threatened to destabilize Rwanda. . . . The uncontrolled circulation of arms in the area was a major cause of destabilization, especially in Rwanda and Burundi."³⁷

In September 1995 this concern led to the third international response, the appointment by the United Nations of a commission of inquiry with the mandate "to collect information and investigate reports relating to the sale or supply of arms and related materiel to former Rwandan government forces in the Great Lakes region in violation of Security Council resolutions; to investigate allegations that such forces are receiving military training in order to destabilize Rwanda; to identify parties aiding and abetting the illegal acquisition of arms by former Rwandan government forces; and to recommend measures to end the illegal flow of arms in the sub-region. . . ."³⁸ In its report of 14 March 1996, the commission of inquiry noted the great difficulties it experienced in getting cooperation from the governments concerned. However, the primary case investigated concerned a shipment of arms from the territory of the Seychelles, using a false end-user certificate from the Zaire government, that ended up in the hands of former Rwandan forces in Zaire. The arms exported included 2,500 AK-47 rifles with 500,000 rounds of ammunition, 2,560 hand grenades, 6,000 60-mm mortars, and 624 82-mm mortars. The commission concluded that "it is highly probable that a violation of the United Nations embargo took place, involving the supply of more than 80 tons of rifles, grenades and ammunition."³⁹

Long after the commission's report, arms continued to flow into this region.⁴⁰ The effect was seen quite clearly when the international community was considering a rescue force for the hundreds of thousands of refugees who had fled Rwanda and were now in eastern Zaire. Armaments possessed by the militants among the refugees were on such a scale that the NGOs in the region attempting to deal with the humanitarian problems were calling on the international force to conduct a disarmament campaign. The major powers, who would supply the troops for a humanitarian mission to open up corridors so that refugees could return to Rwanda, balked at the prospect of disarming the militants—"too dangerous." But without such disarmament, humanitarian assistance was becoming impossible. "It is ridiculous to think that the guys with the guns are going to stand aside for the guys with the soup pots. To imagine that you can do anything else if you don't disarm these guys is illogical, to put it mildly."⁴¹

As can be seen, arms supplies have been a crucial element in all phases of the crisis in the Great Lakes region. The original RPF invasion in 1990 could not have been contemplated until the force was assured of adequate arms. When the invasion failed, the RPF regrouped and redoubled its efforts to obtain arms, as did the Rwandan government forces. The resulting destabilization of Rwanda is a matter of record. As for the second phase, it is also clear that the Rwandan government distributed massive quantities of arms to its (Hutu) citizens for the purpose of genocide, which

then took place. When the RPF finally succeeded in taking over the country in June 1994, the role of armaments continued to be in the forefront, as seen in the rearming of the Hutu in the refugee camps. The crisis played itself out in the subsequent civil war in Zaire. The full range of negative effects from the excessive accumulation and proliferation of arms has been and continues to be displayed in the Great Lakes region. Raids and killings continue in both Rwanda and Burundi, and political and economic development are at a standstill.

Liberia

Although much less is known about the role of arms supplies in the war in Liberia, a similar situation held sway in that country from 1989 until just recently.⁴² In December 1989, a band of guerrillas, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) led by Charles Taylor, invaded Liberia with the hope of overthrowing the regime of Samuel Doe. Doe himself had assumed power in a 1980 overthrow of the increasingly oppressive and corrupt Americo-Liberian regime. Taylor had previously been an associate of Doe and helped him overthrow the "Americo-Liberians." As Taylor's troops moved towards Monrovia, the capital, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) deployed a peacekeeping force to prevent the NPFL from taking over the city. Doe was killed by one-time Taylor ally, General Prince Johnson as the ECOWAS troops and ECOMOG (the Economic Community Monitoring Group) maintained control of Monrovia. The conflict in Liberia has continued for many years as rival bands have vied for control of the country. All have been very heavily armed and have often employed children as soldiers for their "armies." Many of the men and children in Liberia have been deprived of education except for what they received during their time as soldiers. Many children, forced to enter the "armies" as young as ten years old, never finished an elementary level of education. Many teenagers and younger men have not received any practical job training except for what is required of a soldier: how to assemble weapons, military/guerrilla tactics, and so forth.

Taylor's troops were able to capture much of eastern and northern Liberia in their attempt to take Monrovia. They used agricultural products and mineral resources to acquire the arms and ammunition necessary for the campaign beyond Liberia's borders into Guinea and Sierra Leone. Most of these weapons and ammunition were of Eastern European origin. Taylor is said to have received AK-47 ammunition, RPG-7 rockets, and 40-mm grenade launchers from Romania. Often the arms traders would use Burkina Faso as a transshipment point.

Before the peace accords of August 1996, in the more than six years of fighting in Liberia, over a dozen peace and disarmament accords failed.

The resulting violence had disastrous effects on the population and society of Liberia. More than 150,000 people were killed, approximately 1.3 million people became refugees, and Liberia's economy was destroyed, as businesses were pillaged and looted during violent attacks on Liberia's biggest cities.

During this period of warfare, Liberia was also constantly faced with the growing threat of famine. Because of the hazardous conditions that plagued the country for so many years, it was difficult to get agricultural products imported into the country, and local faction leaders would sell existing products for weapons and ammunition, leaving many innocent civilians to starve to death. Men like Charles Taylor "gutted" Liberia's natural resources to pay for the war, and as a result, what was once a very prosperous and productive country now suffers as one of the poorest in West Africa.

As in the Great Lakes region, arms have played a major role in the growth of conflict and are seriously affecting its resolution. When the international community first addressed the conflict in 1989, there were only two armed factions. Unable or unwilling to solve the crisis, the international community stood by as the number of armed groups grew to five, making any resolution, let alone disarmament, all the more difficult. Moreover, the supply of these groups resulted in the inevitable leaking of the weapons to citizens at large.

With the Abuja Agreement of August 1996, there was some hope that the latest peace and disarmament accords could be implemented. On 22 November 1996 the disarmament and demobilization operation began, and on 31 January was extended another week. The process succeeded in demobilizing 21,000 combatants, and a cumulative total of over 10,000 weapons and more than 1,200,000 pieces of ammunition were collected.⁴³ The status of the arms and ammunition collected during the disarmament effort came under immediate discussion. Taylor, the newly elected president of Liberia, made clear statements that these weapons belonged to the Liberian government. But they were put in the joint custody of the United Nations Military Observers in Liberia (UNOMIL) and ECOMOG. With the departure of the UNOMIL military observers on 30 September 1997, the UNOMIL keys were transferred for holding to the residual UNOMIL staff. The weapons remain under lock and key and have not been redistributed to either citizens or the forces of the government of Liberia.⁴⁴

This disarmament and demobilization has allowed the political and economic situation to stabilize somewhat, and elections that were deemed free and fair have put Taylor in office. Reports from the United Nations also show that relief and economic development is once again underway in this war-torn society. It is important to note that the first step in this recovery was the reduction in the number and visibility of the weapons being used by all factions and citizens.

Somalia

Much has been written about the ill-fated United Nations operation in Somalia.⁴⁵ Much of the analysis focuses on the command structure, the confused mandate, and the role of the United States. However, it must be noted that the development of events in Somalia too was greatly influenced by the weapons situation. First, Somalia is the classic case of weapons left over from a previous Cold War conflict recirculating among all parties to the conflict. Furthermore, when the government collapsed in January 1991, weapons were acquired using every conceivable type of illegal actor and mode of supply. Second, despite the fact that the root causes for this conflict—poverty, ethnic rivalries, and the collapse of the state as a guarantor of security for its citizens—were well known, one of the few operational measures available to the UN forces was to focus on the weapons being used. This was especially true of the so called “technical,” a vehicle mounted with a large caliber machine gun that became the symbol of the conflict itself. Despite the lack of a clear mandate to disarm factions, several different attempts were made to do so, especially involving this weapon. When it failed, few viable options were left and the operation eventually came to an unsuccessful close. Thousands of weapons remain in the hands of warring factions and civilians, following disarmament attempts that were met with resentment and noncompliance. As in other such cases, the civilian casualties from these weapons have far outpaced the casualties to the combatants. Somalia remains a battlefield among warring factions using small arms weapons and light weapons. In addition the availability of these weapons has resulted in lethal and rampant crime and anarchy.

TYPE 2: POSTCONFLICT THREATS TO POLITICAL STABILITY

The second type of conflict in which the excessive accumulations and proliferation of light weapons produces negative effects is the postconflict situation. It is similar to the first type in many ways, especially in its effects on civilians and the society as a whole. Where it differs is in the phase of the conflict cycle. In countries where a civil war or the transition to a democratic society has occurred, the influx of small arms and light weapons to an area can severely threaten the peace process and the progress already made. The danger is that the conflict will once again flare up. In that sense it is every bit as much of a conflict prevention challenge as in the first and more familiar type of armed conflict. Two cases where much is known, Central America and Southern Africa, illustrate how the excessive accumulation and availability of light weapons can threaten to turn a postconflict situation into renewed armed violence.

Central America

In Central America, three major civil wars have ended in the past seven years—Nicaragua (1990), El Salvador (1992), and Guatemala (1996).

The Environment. These countries are now creating democratic societies based on peace processes in part negotiated by the United Nations. Although the dedication to peace and stability in these countries is strong, Central America is awash with small arms and light weapons in the millions. Most of these weapons are not under government control. They are military-style weapons, such as assault rifles, hand grenades, rocket launchers, and mortars, originally designed for use by state-controlled armed forces.

These weapons poured into the region from a variety of sources in the 1970s and 1980s, mainly as a result of the basic tensions produced by the Cold War. Important sources included the United States (to all governments in the region and to the Contras), the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries (to Cuba and Nicaragua and oppositionist forces in El Salvador and Guatemala), Israel (to Nicaragua, Haiti, Guatemala), Vietnam (U.S. weapons left over from the Vietnam war), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (via Cuba), and Cuba (major conduit for Soviet bloc weapons).

Although some weapons still flow into this region from the United States, the major acquisition mode today is one of diffusion and circulation within the region. Much of this trade is illicit. The illicit circulation of these weapons is highly correlated to the drug trade in three ways. First, Colombia and other South American states are a major source of drugs for the U.S. market. Central America is a major thoroughfare for this traffic. Given that the drug trafficking network is illegal and under attack from legitimate governments, weapons are essential to the members of this network. Much of the armed conflict taking place in the Central American states is related to drug trafficking. Second the clandestine networks developed for the drug trade are now themselves being used as conduits for weapons as well. Third, the billions of dollars in drug money acquired in Colombia and other countries means that money is no object in acquiring the weapons needed to maintain the trade. In addition, this attracts illegal weapons dealers both in the region and internationally. The drug cartels have become major importers of light weapons.

The terrain of this region is characterized by naturally porous borders. For example the border between Guatemala and Mexico has one stretch of 480 kilometers of jungle. There is practically no surveillance of the El Salvador-Guatemala and Honduras-El Salvador borders, mainly due to the difficult terrain. The many clandestine airstrips and small ports in

the region add to the difficulty of monitoring and controlling illicit trade in drugs and weapons.

The demand for weapons by these new types of actors—street gangs, drug cartels, and so forth—has seen attacks on state arsenals, armed forces, and police increase for the purpose of acquiring weapons. There are also lingering political conflicts that create an incentive to use this source of supply. In addition, countries in this region are only just beginning to reform their police forces and judicial systems.

Countries in this region suffer from serious economic problems. Three of them—Haiti, El Salvador, and Nicaragua—are just emerging from periods of war and violence that wreaked havoc on their citizens.

The region is also characterized by the presence of a gun culture or, as a Mexican official put it, a “fondness for guns.” This culture predates and has been exacerbated by the recent upsurge in small arms and light weapons in this region.

The Effects. In Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and increasingly Costa Rica, the growing availability of military-style light weapons has made crime the number one social problem. Car jacking, kidnapping, assaults, robberies, and trafficking of contraband are commonplace. The increase in lethality and firepower that comes with military-style weapons has emboldened criminals, who often are better armed than police or military forces.

The widespread abundance of weapons in this class results in violence often being the first option for conflict resolution, frustrating efforts to restore peace, lawfulness, and stability in a nonviolent manner. Disputes such as those over land, economic inequality, and human rights are increasingly settled by use of force. In Guatemala the peace process proceeded in fits and starts as both sides found it difficult to control the use of these arms by dissidents. The distribution of arms by the government to the civil patrols in Guatemala (20,000 weapons to 400,000 people during the 1980s) resulted in a preference for solving problems by force, a process that the United Nations and the government of Guatemala is finding difficult to reverse.⁴⁶ This has also been termed “mental militarization,” where violent responses to social problems are the norm.

The above two problems have led to a cycle of violence in which citizens either protect themselves with their own arms or hire one of an increasing number of private security organizations. In Guatemala over 4,500 neighborhood groups have emerged, as well as 33 authorized and 115 unauthorized private security groups. In 1992 Guatemala relaxed its gun possession laws so that more citizens could protect themselves. Colombia did the same as early as 1967.⁴⁷ The sheer number of such weapons in the hands of individuals complicates any solution based on disarmament.

The increasing reliance on violence as a result of weapons availability combined with weak state authority has resulted in the emergence of an increasing number of actors who owe their continued existence to the possession and use of small arms and light weapons. These groups include substate groups such as street gangs, private militias, narcoterrorists, paramilitary death squads and other vigilante groups, and more structured and politically motivated oppositionist military forces. Guatemala and El Salvador have a particularly acute problem in this regard. Disarmament and restoration of law and order are made more difficult in such a situation.

Most states in this region are trying to nurture new democratic political systems (El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua) or trying to prevent their systems from declining into authoritarian states. However, the cycle of violence and the growing and omnipresent gun culture have allowed and in some cases fostered the increased use of state violence and repression. This threatens to lead either to the development of violence or its resumption by oppositionist forces, just when such forces have been disbanded (for example, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Haiti).

The increasing violence in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and other states has seen economic development projects either canceled or postponed. One reason is insecurity, since assets supplied to recipient states in the grip of violence can be diverted towards criminal activities. Another factor is that crime and violence disrupts the infrastructure, such as roads and public transportation, needed for development projects. In addition this lack of security and the need for the state to respond with security forces, means that fewer resources are available for development, and increasingly states cannot meet the basic needs of its people.

In El Salvador completion of the peace process and postconflict reconstruction is being hampered by armed violence using weapons left over from the civil war. For example, the United Nations Development Program is assisting in the building of a new and uncorrupt police force. Although there has been significant progress, the program cannot train enough police to keep ahead of the criminal activity. This has resulted in the emergence of vigilante groups that are difficult to control and in pressures to bring the army into police duties. This has increased the potential for armed resolution of conflict. In Guatemala, during the peace process, the UN organization experienced everything from the machine gunning of its headquarters to serious resistance from the civil patrols to disarm as required by the peace process.

All of the above consequences have had the severest effect on civilians, who have been affected in two ways. First, the number of people killed and injured from armed violence has increased significantly in the past few years. In El Salvador the number is estimated at 20,000 since the peace was

signed in 1992. In Guatemala, eight out of ten crimes are committed with firearms. In addition to the numbers of civilians affected, the lethality of the weapons insures that the injuries are more severe, creating huge strains on the healthcare systems of most countries in the region.

South Africa

With the end of apartheid and South Africa's first nonracial election, the hope for peace was bright in 1994. Although the country has made incredible strides since the end of apartheid in 1989 and the establishment of transitional democratic government in 1994, the challenges for South Africa are still great. Political and market reforms are not producing an increase in the standard of living for the majority of South Africans, but are instead causing the economy to stagnate with resulting high poverty rates. Poverty is in fact the most pressing threat to South African democracy, as it has led to violent crime and social unrest. Dealing with these root causes is made even more difficult by the growth in the accumulation and availability of small arms and light weapons.⁴⁸

The laws concerning weapons possession have changed since the apartheid era. Before 1994 gun ownership was limited to white citizens, but today gun ownership has spread across the spectrum of South African society. The rise in gun sales has been fueled by the increase in violent crime, and the theft of these personal firearms is one of the most common crimes. Handguns are the commonest weapons employed in crimes and disruptions in South Africa, and the supply is indigenous. South African weapons production facilities are unique in Africa, and the industry provides a multitude of weapons for South Africa's own consumption.

South African weapons also are acquired through the flow of illegal automatic weapons across South Africa's borders. The AK-47 is the most common military-style weapon used in crimes in South Africa. The resolution of civil wars in Mozambique and Angola has "freed up" these weapons, which enter the country illegally smuggled through porous, poorly controlled borders. In Mozambique, a poorly executed disarmament plan resulted in more than 800,000 AK-47s remaining available for use and/or export. The leakage from state armories has also brought many weapons into South African society. The security forces possess as many as 5 million weapons, many in the former homelands and rural areas, which are poorly controlled. In addition, the former government distributed as many as 4,000 automatic weapons to civilians in the homelands in order to divide the opposition against itself. These weapons are now the subject of a so far unsuccessful effort to find, register, and collect them. In addition, homemade guns, or *qwashas*, are common, especially in the town-

ships where insubstantial police efforts leave the inhabitants feeling the need to protect themselves.

The police seized 9,700 firearms during 1993 (including 1,386 AK-47 rifles), 11,647 firearms in 1994 (1,589 AK-47), and 5,307 firearms (570 AK-47) in the first six months of 1995. A recent South African police report stated that "ready access to firearms has no doubt led to the increased use of firearms particularly in violent crime. . . . Crime networks are so well established that the same channels and networks are often used for smuggling firearms, drugs, vehicles, ivory, rhino horn, precious metals, and gemstones. Firearms networks supply firearms to criminal gangs, which not only provide a ready market for illegal firearms but also form a vital link in their distribution."⁴⁹

Two examples illustrate the growing insecurity and alienation of South African society due to the increase in violence and crime. First, the high number of weapons is exacerbating violence in the taxi business that has been dubbed "the taxi wars." These "wars" emerged from economic competition between long-distance carriers—predominantly Zulu speaking and thus identified by local drivers as members of the Inkatha Freedom Party—and local drivers identified with the African National Congress (ANC), who have thus become politicized. As a result of the competition, the long-distance carriers have begun carrying weapons for protection, often arming themselves with illegal weapons, easily obtained in the provinces such as Kwa Zulu-Natal. A cycle of violence developed as long-distance carriers launched their own preemptive strikes when rumors of impending hits from local drivers spread.

A second example is the formation of vigilante groups responding violently to the violence surrounding them. One such group is People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD), a predominantly Muslim group in the Cape Town area. PAGAD ostensibly formed in response to the growing drug trafficking and derivative violence that arrived in Cape Town and its vicinity. However, the good intentions of PAGAD have become muddied by rumors of PAGAD involvement in vigilante murders of reputed drug dealers. PAGAD justifies extrajudicial actions by arguing that the police are underequipped and undermanned and have a difficult time arresting the drug dealers who are better armed and more powerfully connected.

TYPE 3: STALLED TRANSITION

A third type of conflict in which weapons have played a major role is that arising out the stalled transition from authoritarian rule and a centralized economy to democracy and a free market system. The end of the Cold

War has created new democracies throughout Europe and Central Asia. This process almost always leads to relative deprivation on the part of citizens who then become frustrated with the lack or slowness of progress. An infusion of readily available small arms and light weapons can threaten and damage the fragile sense of stability and security in these countries.

Albania

In Albania we have seen the recent destabilization of the entire country due to armed violence. How did this happen? The "root" causes are known—the failure of the government to meet the needs of its people, economic crisis, corruption, fraudulent elections, and in the short run a failed pyramid scheme that saw a large segment of Albania's people lose life savings. These causes created significant relative deprivation, as seen by growing demonstrations and pressure on the government. Overnight the situation changed from tension to armed violence due to one factor, the almost unlimited supply of weapons to all segments of the society as a result of the opening up of arsenals full of small arms and light weapons. The unique factor in the case of Albania has been the mode of acquisition of these weapons. For the most part, the weapons were acquired when the government caches and weapons depots were raided and looted by angry mobs of civilians. However, the local authorities in some cases opened weapons warehouses themselves, hoping armed civilians would be adequately prepared to fight the government. Current estimates now place the initial number of weapons in the hands of civilians at over 1 million. Some of these have since been collected.

Although the levels of violence do not approach those of neighboring Bosnia, the effects of this supply are clear for all to see. Shootouts among rival groups became commonplace and road travel crawled to a halt as armed groups blocked passage.

Once the arms distributions had made the situation hazardous, countries such as the United States airlifted its citizens out of the country. In addition an already significant exodus of Albanians to Italy increased due to the greater instability and anarchy that ensued. In April 1997 an international force led by Italy arrived in Albania to try to keep some semblance of peace and to enhance the delivery of humanitarian aid in the face of the multitude of weapons in the hands of civilians. Their mandate was to secure the main roads and distribution points for aid, and to help restore infrastructure in the run-up to scheduled elections. Later the force was given the mandate of overseeing the elections.

But the natural political rivalries that existed in this volatile political climate had been transformed into armed rivalries. Not surprisingly

the international community was not very optimistic that they could assist in setting up elections. "It is hard to imagine a free and fair election within three months. The whole country is awash with arms."⁵⁰ Unlike Poland or Czechoslovakia, Albania has no democratic tradition or base to work from. In the words of one Western diplomat, "Albania is going to be in a prolonged crisis. The Mad Max appearance of violence is not going to be very helpful. It's not Europe. We're into an Eastern Zaire situation."⁵¹ "No one expects any Albanian poll to meet Western standards of electoral hygiene. But, with one million or so guns in private hands and passions running high, candidates who show their faces in the wrong parts of the country risk more than heckling."⁵² This is no less true in 1998 than in 1997, although the number of guns is now down to about 500,000 according to Reuters and the Associated Press.

Armed chaos and instability also put severe constraints on what the international community can do in such situations. An initial effort in March 1997 by the European Union to dispatch military and police advisers to help the new government in Albania was rejected in favor of a more scaled down proposal to send a fact finding mission.⁵³ Eventually the Italian-led force of 7,000 troops from eight countries was authorized by the United Nations and backed by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The danger of these weapons in the hands of civilians is real. Many innocent people, including children, have been killed or severely injured in the many raids on Albanian weapons depots and the ensuing chaos and random violence in which these weapons are used. As a result of the small arms and light weapons in the hands of civilians, violence, looting, and plundering became commonplace almost immediately. "There is no enemy, there is no war, but night and day this city (Vlore) reverberates with gunfire. Rifles (AK-47s) that were dumped on town streets to arm a popular rebellion are now being used in menacing shows of bravado at roadblocks on the main boulevard. The armed revolt here, that began ten days ago as the outgrowth of peaceful protests, is showing signs of going sour and giving way to anarchy."⁵⁴ The Albania case also demonstrates how excessive arms can lead directly to refugee problems. One of the biggest problems in the first few months was the exodus of Albanians to Italy—some 13,000 between January and April. Getting them to return was a high priority for the international force sent in on the limited mandate to insure the flow of humanitarian aid. "How such a limited approach will make it possible for refugees to go home is not clear. They fled not from hunger but from guns in the hands of almost every Albanian family."⁵⁵

With the assistance of the multinational force of 7,000, elections were held and a government formed. Most of the multinational force has now left Albania. "Since then the country has become, if anything more

lawless . . . [and] criminal gangs that had split much of the country into fiefs are free again to feud. Bandits flourish. Roads kept open by the foreign troops are again dangerous—without order, donors will withhold large-scale aid, businesses will not function and taxes will stay uncollected.”⁵⁶ The new government is trying to rebuild Albania. And it is significant that their highest priority is restoring order. “Most important of all, the government is drafting a law to make it harder for Albanians to keep some one million guns looted from police stations and barracks during the anarchy, and from mid-September it will step up a campaign to seize them.”⁵⁷

Kosovo and Macedonia

The destabilization of Albania is in large part due to the sudden availability of massive quantities of lethal light weapons. The international community has begun to deal with the aftermath and to devise schemes to disarm much of the population so that economic and political development can proceed. However tragic this development has been, the potential for violence in Macedonia and the Kosovo area of Serbia is even greater. In both cases, one with an oppressed minority (Macedonia) and the other with an oppressed majority (Kosovo), the situation remained fairly peaceful. However, the sudden availability of uncontrolled arms supplies in neighboring Albania has threatened to destabilize both of these regions.

During the civil war in the former Yugoslavia, the ethnic Albanians of Kosovo quietly waited out the war, thinking passive resistance was the way to independence, despite the fact that they number 1.7 million compared to 200,000 Serbs. But independence did not come to this province of Serbia, and pressure increased for a more violent strategy of change. Despite the peaceful stance of most Albanians in Kosovo, one guerrilla group, known as the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), decided that since the peaceful stance taken by Kosovo’s leader during the civil war did not result in independence, it would begin a campaign “aiming to terrify Serbs out of Kosovo.”⁵⁸ In the 1997 the group was responsible for 30 attacks. With the potential of a huge weapons surge and armed sympathizers arriving from neighboring Albania, many feared that the KLA could drum up support from thousands of citizens, leading to a war of independence for Kosovo’s oppressed majority.

The opening up of the weapons stocks in arsenals and military bases in Albania created a large number of illicit arms dealers. The supply of AK-47s is especially significant. In just one town the Albanian military’s only AK-47 factory was cleaned out in a looting spree in which a total of 110,000 new assault rifles were taken. Citizens of the town confirm that many of these weapons were sold in large quantities to Albanian brokers who get

them to Macedonia. In a recent event, a Macedonian court sentenced an ethnic Albanian mayor to thirteen years in jail for inciting protests in which police killed three demonstrators. "Diplomats in Skopje said the jailing of Mr. Osmani would raise tensions in the region, which has a plentiful supply of weapons smuggled in from neighboring Albania."⁵⁹ And in Kosovo there were reports that the "sudden flood of arms into the region from looted Albania weapons stores adds a new element of instability."⁶⁰ It was only a matter of time before this sudden increase in weapons availability and the KLA effort became linked. By May 1998, a low-level insurgency was in full swing, with the predictable effects on civilians in Kosovo.

CONCLUSIONS FROM CASES

These brief descriptions of conflicts affected by the excessive accumulation and availability of small arms and light weapons were designed to set the stage for what can be done in the way of preventive action. They are intended to be illustrative and by no means include all of the existing or potential conflicts that need to be addressed by the international community. It also must be said that not all conflicts are susceptible to policy actions that focus on preventing or stemming the flow of light weapons.

But certain points are clear at this stage in the report. It can no longer be said that weapons don't matter to the buildup of conflict situations. In most such situations the parties involved spend a great deal of time systematically arming themselves as a necessary prelude to conflict. And the modes of weapons acquisition are much less susceptible to state intervention than during the Cold War or for more lethal weapons such as tanks, aircraft, missiles, and weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, the effects of these conflicts can be closely related to the distribution of weapons themselves. The arming of significant segments of a society with lethal weapons such as hand grenades and assault rifles is having a wide range of effects far beyond casualties to formal combatants. In all cases it has been demonstrated that this new availability of light weapons is affecting social, economic, and political developments in ways that can no longer be ignored by the international community.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SWINGS INTO ACTION

Given the realities of the cases just described, how has the international community responded to the proliferation and accumulation of light weap-

onry and the accompanying negative effects? During the Cold War, the arms control debate centered on competing hypotheses—it is the weapons that are the problem versus it is the users of these weapons that are the problem. Attempts at arms control involving conventional weapons were normally condemned from the start, with the dominant view being that states have a sovereign right to defend themselves and that arms control should follow conflict resolution, not the reverse. But now the words and actions of the citizens, governments, and international organizations that deal with the conflicts point to a new emphasis on the weapons themselves, a growing international consensus that small arms and light weapons play a major role in the outbreak and exacerbation of conflict.

From June 1996 until August 1997, the UN Small Arms Panel held regional workshops in support of its mandate to write and submit a report to the secretary-general.⁶¹ At its South Africa workshop in September 1996, governmental witnesses from several countries, especially South Africa, made it very clear that the influx of AK-47s and hand grenades from both Mozambique and Angola was a major factor in destabilizing the region and threatening to undo the progress made in the years since the end of the apartheid government. In Rwanda, an October 1996 delivery of light weapons by the government of South Africa to the government of Rwanda was suspended in response to complaints from those in the region dealing with the conflicts. In Haiti, the first priority for the U.S. Army troops entering the country under a UN mandate was to take action to buy or seize as many weapons as possible to enhance the success of the mission. In Northern Ireland, despite centuries of sectarian conflict with root causes that are known to all and the recent political agreement signed in April 1998, the way forward will still depend on the issue of decommissioning weapons by both the IRA and the Protestant paramilitary forces. In Albania, the opening of arsenals to all citizens has resulted in an armed populace. Outside forces sent in to deal with this conflict situation, and the new government that has emerged after this intervention, must now focus first on how to collect or otherwise dampen the use of these weapons. An impressive array of actions has begun to coalesce around the issue of small arms and light weapons as a primary factor in preventing and reducing armed conflict.

THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations is turning its attention to the problems stemming from the proliferation of light weapons and their use in conflicts. The following is a brief chronicle of actions taken or under way:

Peace Operations

The combatants in these post-Cold War conflicts employed mainly small arms and light weapons. United Nations peace forces and the civilian populations in these conflict areas have been increasingly subjected to the negative effects of these weapons, including a rising level of casualties. As a result peace operations now routinely involve disarmament and weapons collection and destruction; outcomes vary widely, depending on mandates and their implementation.

The Mali Mission

As early as 1985, General Assembly Resolution 40/151H reaffirmed the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, and offered United Nations advisory services in disarmament and security to member states, on request. This resolution was used by Mali in October 1993 to request the secretary-general to assist in the collection of light weapons proliferating in that country during the conflict between Mali and the Tuareg minority. The requested assistance was provided in the form of an advisory mission in August 1994, which issued its report to the secretary-general in November 1994. On 15 December 1994, the General Assembly adopted resolution 49/75G welcoming the initiative taken by Mali in respect of the illicit circulation of small arms and their collection in the affected states of the Sahelo-Saharan region. Action continued in this region in February and March 1995, when the same advisory mission visited Burkino Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal. Their report was sent to the secretary-general later in 1995. The result has been a relatively successful turn-in and collection of weapons, and a resolution to the conflict between Mali and the Tuareg minority.⁶²

Great Lakes Commission of Inquiry

Besides its activities in the Sahelo-Saharan region, the United Nations addressed the proliferation of armaments in the Great Lakes region of southern Africa. In Resolution 1013 of 7 September 1995 the Security Council authorized an international commission of inquiry to investigate allegations that former Rwandan government forces were being supplied with arms in violation of a previous arms embargo imposed by the Security Council. The commission confirmed these allegations and concluded that much more could and should be done to stem the flow of weapons in this region.⁶³

Secretary-General

In January 1995, the secretary-general reviewed the experience of the past three years and issued *Supplement to An Agenda for Peace*.⁶⁴ After reviewing the progress made in weapons of mass destruction, he called for "parallel progress in conventional arms, particularly with respect to light weapons." He introduced the concept of microdisarmament, referring to the light weapons actually being used in the conflicts with which the UN is dealing—those "that are actually killing people in the hundreds of thousands." He went on to refer to the "enormous proliferation of automatic assault weapons, antipersonnel mines and the like." He also identified the negative consequences of such proliferation, including the economic costs of acquiring such weapons, the dissipation of resources that could be used for development, and the human cost in casualties. In regard to small arms other than antipersonnel land mines he noted that the "world is awash with them and traffic in them is very difficult to monitor, let alone intercept." The secretary-general's statement set forth the challenge and in some cases provided concrete guidelines for the work ahead. He concluded with a challenge to the international community—a challenge addressed in this report. "It will take a long time to find effective solutions. I believe strongly that the search should begin now."

Guidelines—Illicit Trade

On 6 December 1991 the General Assembly adopted Resolution 46/36H on international arms transfers, with particular emphasis on the illicit arms trade. On 3 May 1996 the United Nations Disarmament Commission, after three years of deliberation, adopted a consensus set of guidelines for international arms transfers in the context of General Assembly Resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991.⁶⁵ These guidelines are relevant to the discussion in this report, in that a significant amount of the illicit trade is in small arms and light weapons.

Panel of Experts on Small Arms

On 12 December 1995, as part of a continuing effort to address the increasing problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 50/70B entitled "Small Arms." This resolution requested the secretary-general to prepare a report, with the assistance of a panel of qualified governmental experts, on: "(1) the types of small arms and light weapons actually being used in conflicts being dealt with by the United Nations; (2) the nature and causes

of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and transfer of small arms and light weapons, including their illicit production and trade; and (3) the ways and means to prevent and reduce the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and transfer of small arms and light weapons, in particular as they cause or exacerbate conflict." The panel held three regional workshops and in September 1997 submitted its report to the secretary-general, excerpts from which appear in this report.

Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice is a component of the UN Economic and Social Council and is based in Vienna. In May 1997 this commission passed a resolution on firearm regulation for the purpose of crime prevention and public health and safety. The resolution was based on information provided by 50 governments who voluntarily responded to a survey that covered issues related to firearms, including legislation, regulation, use, trade and manufacturing, trafficking, policy, and public education initiatives. Although its focus was on crime from a domestic perspective, it uncovered and documented much evidence that points to small arms and light weapons as an international problem. The following are some examples:⁶⁶

- The absence of effective firearm regulation in one member state can undermine not only the regulatory efforts but also the effective governance of other member states.
- Import and export controls on firearms are not sufficient by themselves to prevent illicit trafficking in firearms.
- Transnational illicit trafficking in firearms is a serious concern of member states. It contributes to unacceptable levels of homicide, other violent crime, suicide, and accidents involving the use of firearms.

The resolution encourages member states to consider regulatory approaches with the following five common elements:⁶⁷

- Regulations relating to firearm safety and storage;
- Appropriate penalties for serious offenses involving the misuse or unlawful possession of firearms;
- Amnesty or similar programs to encourage citizens to surrender illegal, unsafe, or unwanted firearms;

- A responsible and effective licensing system;
- A recordkeeping system for the commercial distribution of firearms, and the appropriate marking of firearms at manufacture and at import.

The work of the commission came to fruition in April 1998, when more than 50 countries signed a draft ECOSOC resolution adopting the above principles.

THE WORLD BANK

The World Bank has set up a small section on postconflict reconstruction. This office will deal with issues such as demobilization of soldiers and their reintegration into society, the collection and destruction of weapons surplus, and the security needs of the governments and societies involved. The office will bring together those parts of the World Bank already involved in this aspect of postconflict reconstruction.

REGIONAL EFFORTS

The various regions of the world, while welcoming UN assistance, are also taking action on their own.

West Africa

As indicated above in the section on United Nations actions, the countries of West Africa have availed themselves of UN assistance in dealing with problems stemming from the proliferation and availability of light weapons that have destabilized the subregion. But in addition they have acted on their own. A conference on conflict prevention, disarmament, and development in West Africa was convened in Bamako from November 25 to 29, 1996. Delegations from 12 West African countries searched for a common position on possibilities for future regional cooperation. The idea of a moratorium on the importing, exporting, and manufacturing of light arms was the subject of particular interest throughout the conference. Delegates agreed to submit the idea to their respective governments.

In March 1997 these same states reconvened in Mali to consider a formal proposal for a moratorium. The moratorium would be a measure to build confidence that would cover the importing, exporting, and manu-

facturing of light arms, which is understood as any weapon that can be carried by one soldier or mounted on a light vehicle and that does not require specific maintenance. This category includes: handguns, rifles, machine guns, land mines, grenades, portable rocket launchers, and mortars as well as their munitions. Initially, the moratorium would be a declaratory measure, lasting three years. A particular novel aspect of this proposal is that the supplier countries will be asked to cooperate by not supplying weapons to the region.

A moratorium on light arms has never before been attempted. Establishing a dialogue between those who use these arms and those who supply them, and enjoining the suppliers to respect the provisions of the moratorium and to aid its implementation constitutes a new and original approach. The objective is to create a framework within which a secure environment for socioeconomic development can be created. Dialogue continues toward an agreement on this moratorium.⁶⁸

Southern Africa

The Southern Africa Development Cooperation organization has established an interstate defense and security committee. At a recent meeting of its public security subcommittee, it recognized that "firearms and drug trafficking cause the most serious threat to communities in the region, particularly the smuggling of firearms. . . ." The committee went on to recommend the following:

- That registration of firearms be computerized and that the procedures relating to the acquisition of firearms be tightened
- That a regional database be created where information for all stolen firearms be stored and be made available to all member states
- That special operations where illegal firearms could be retrieved be conducted at a national or regional level⁶⁹

Latin America

The Organization of American States (OAS) has begun to address the problem of arms and conflict from two different perspectives. First, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission of the OAS is developing model regulations for the control of the smuggling of weapons and explosives and its linkage to drug trafficking in the Inter-American region. This is being done through a group of experts on the control of arms and

explosives related to drug trafficking. The methods currently being used are the exchange of information regarding illicit transnational movements of firearms and explosives, and the development of harmonized measures for the controlled, legal import and export of firearms and explosives. The overall objective is to increase cooperation among states.

A second OAS initiative is the development of the Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials, signed by all OAS states in November 1997. It requires each OAS state to establish a national firearms control system and a register of manufacturers, traders, importers, and exporters of these commodities. Each participating state is asked to establish a national body to interact with other states and with an OAS advisory committee. The convention also calls for the standardization of national laws and procedures within the OAS, and guarantees for the effective control of borders and ports.

A third effort is the draft of a regional agreement for mutual legal assistance with respect to illegal trafficking in weapons, developed by the Central American Security Commission. Its goal is increased cooperation among the Central American states to combat the illegal trafficking in weapons, ammunition, explosives, and military equipment that threatens the stability of the democratic institutions and of peace in the region.

European Union

In June 1997 the European Union (EU) took some initial steps to deal with the illicit trafficking of arms in that region by agreeing to the EU Program for Preventing and Combating Illicit Trafficking in Conventional Arms. Citing the importance of the issue and the several actions already taken by the United Nations, the EU member states vowed to strengthen their collective efforts to prevent and combat illicit trafficking of arms, particularly of small arms, within the EU. Further they called for concerted action to assist other countries in preventing and combating illicit trafficking of arms. Specifically they recommended focusing on strengthening laws, training police and customs officials to enforce export laws, setting up regional points of contact to report trafficking, setting up national commissions, preventing corruption, and promoting regional cooperation and the use of data bases.

The EU also agreed to suppress such trafficking as part of UN peace operations, to set up weapons collection, buy back, and destruction programs, to set up educational programs to promote awareness of the negative consequences of such trafficking, and to promote the integration of former combatants into civilian life.

EFFORTS BY THE OECD

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has recently addressed for the first time the linkage between armed conflict and its effect on development. Its development assistance committee formed a task force on conflict, peace, and development cooperation whose two years of work culminated in a draft policy statement by ministers and heads of agencies in May 1997. Although the OECD report emphasized that conflict prevention activities will have the most effect if targeted at the root causes of conflict, the issue of weapons accumulations at each phase of conflict was addressed. Key OECD findings include the following:

- In situations of submerged tensions, "visible actions to address root causes of unrest, based on suitable early warning, analysis of information, and the rapid flow of signals, are vitally important. Activities could be aimed at . . . limiting the flow and diffusion of arms, especially light weapons. . . ."⁷⁰
- "Where crisis conditions in society become manifest (as evidenced by, for example, social unrest, armed opposition, mass demonstrations, etc.), timely prevention measures must be considered and rapidly implemented. . . . At this stage, it becomes particularly important to monitor and prevent the stockpiling of arms by the conflicting parties. . . ."⁷¹
- In fragile periods of transition and during the postconflict phase, disarmament, demobilization, and mine clearance are important.⁷²

NGOs AND ACADEMICS

In the NGO world, several efforts are under way directly focusing on the linkage between the accumulation and availability of small arms and light weapons and armed violence. There is also significant literature developing around the problems associated with the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. These activities and key academic works are listed in the appendix to this report.

Activities by both academics and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are focused on several important functions. First, a community of experts is being developed around the issue of small arms, light weapons, and microdisarmament. This community is linked through the use of the Internet, the exchange of papers and documents, workshops and conferences, and the publication of several important books on the subject of light weaponry. Second, information from public sources on types of light

weapons is being published. Third, national capabilities for production of such weapons are becoming transparent enough to include rudimentary information on their export. Fourth, case studies are being written by regional specialists who have witnessed directly the impact of small arms and light weapons on conflict.

CONCLUSION

Chapter 2 has made it clear that the acquisition and proliferation of excessive levels of small arms and light weapons, and the accompanying negative effects, are now on the regional and international agenda. Some academics, and those who feel that focusing on weapons as causal is a flawed and at best premature approach, demand *evidence* of a causal link between arms buildups and acquisitions and the outbreak of conflict. As can be seen in the examples given here and, more important, in the response of the international community, the need for scientific evidence becomes less important as the correlational reality that informs most public policy becomes overwhelming. The international community has begun to focus on the specific effects of a type of conflict fought with a type of weapon much less susceptible to preventive action through classic arms control techniques such as arms embargoes and export controls. Encouraging actions have already been taken, but they are only preliminary steps in the direction of devising strategies and policies that can prevent conflict from occurring or reemerging after a period of peace has been established. In particular, these preliminary steps show that early warning and prevention is in its infancy. Could any of these deadly conflicts involving mass violence have been prevented? How can future conflicts be prevented? It is to this crucial topic that this report now turns.

3

CAUSES, EARLY WARNING, AND POLICY TOOLS FOR PREVENTIVE ACTION

IF PRACTICAL POLICY TOOLS to prevent conflict by focusing on the flow and accumulation of arms are to be developed, the work must proceed in a logical fashion. In political terms steps must first be taken to draw attention to the negative consequences of this proliferation, namely the death of thousands of people, mainly civilians, and a serious decline in human security. The illustrative case studies and the initial response by the international community demonstrate that this awareness is beginning to develop, although much more needs to be done. Resistance to policies based on weapons will remain significant without this effort. Second, since the type of conflicts and weapons now used in the world are different, a case must be made for preventive policy tools that go beyond those arms control approaches developed during the Cold War. The early parts of this report were designed with this goal in mind.

But any preventive action must be based on an understanding of several other crucial findings. Why has this class of weapon become so

available? And prevention means acting early. Why haven't states, or the international community, acted earlier to prevent these weapons from inflicting human suffering at levels that are clearly unacceptable? Why has early warning, which ironically originated in the military sphere, been so absent when it comes to the accumulation and flow of arms?

CAUSES

In a very basic sense, policy action is based on causes. Before an attempt is made to change a social condition, in this case armed conflict and violence, the causes of this condition must be understood and agreed to by those who would develop and apply resources to the policy tool. As stated in the introduction to this report, this is always problematic when it comes to preventing conflict, due to the complex nature of conflict and the natural tension between root and operational causes. The literature on the causes of war is ancient and extensive, and this report will not review that literature. But it can be said that scholars and observers of conflict are a long way from a theory that will meet the test of science. But some basic attempt must be made to answer the question of why light weaponry is now of concern to the international community, when during the Cold War it was not.

The actions of the international community on this question indicate that we are beyond the first argument, root causes versus operational causes. Almost every current effort to deal with this problem acknowledges root causes, but then quickly moves on to operational causes. The UN Small Arms Panel took this approach, stating in the first paragraph under "causes" that "accumulations of small arms and light weapons by themselves do not cause the conflicts in which they are used. . . . These conflicts have underlying causes that arise from a number of accumulated and complex political, commercial, socioeconomic, ethnic, cultural, and ideological factors. Such conflicts will not be finally resolved without addressing the root causes."⁷³ Then the remainder of the report moves on to discuss operational causes involving weapons.

Increasingly the root causes of violence are being addressed by focusing on the tools of violence.⁷⁴ This is so because of (1) the increasing evidence of the direct link between the availability of these weapons and deaths and injuries to civilians (fewer weapons mean fewer casualties); (2) the symbolic nature of weapons such as assault rifles and grenades as tools of power and repression; and (3) the fact that it is one aspect of violence that can be addressed with concrete policies (decommissioning, collec-

tion, etc.), given the appropriate political will on the part of the warring parties.

But this only means that the discussion moves on to the next dimension, namely, identifying what must be fixed in order to prevent the reoccurrence of the conflicts all seek to avoid. Solutions require changes involving real actors, processes, and systems—governments, military forces, arms dealers, export controls, border surveillance, and so forth. Inevitably this requires those seeking solutions to examine both supply and demand factors or causes. The work of academics and NGOs is characterized by this division of causal factors, alternatively calling for better government and security in the state experiencing the problem, and for more controls by those states from which the arms originate.

This natural debate was recently played out in the United Nations Small Arms Panel. This group consisted of experts from sixteen countries, many of whom leaned naturally toward either the demand or the supply side as the major cause of excessive arms accumulations. Countries such as Iran, Egypt, Sri Lanka, El Salvador, Colombia, and Mali could be expected to point to forces outside their countries as the primary cause of the arms flows. Important arms-producing countries such as Belgium, the United States, Germany, and Russia could just as easily point to the demand conditions in recipient states as the primary reason for the flows. Since the panel was required to produce a consensus report, it may well reflect a balanced view that can serve us well as a precursor to developing policy tools. In Part IV of the final consensus report the panel acknowledges that “there is no single cause for these accumulations and their subsequent transformation into instability and conflict. The variety of different causes is usefully categorized by demand and supply factors.”⁷⁵

On the demand side the experts identified the following factors:

- Internal or intrastate conflicts serve to attract large numbers of small arms and light weapons.
- Insurgency and terrorism remain as factors in the destabilizing use of small arms, light weapons, or explosives, and several international fora have referred to the link between terrorism and such weapons.
- The diminution or loss of control of the state over its security function and its inability to guarantee the security of its citizens, create a natural demand for weapons by citizens seeking to protect themselves and their property.
- The inability of states to provide governance and security after a conflict has ended, in combination with the incomplete reintegration into so-

society of former combatants, may lead to those combatants' participation in crime and armed violence.

- The presence of a culture of weapons that makes the possession of a military-style weapon a status symbol, can easily be transformed into a culture of violence when basic security structures are absent and poverty is prevalent.

Causes on the supply side include factors that transformed the global availability of small arms and light weapons into their acquisition, transfer, and accumulation in specific regions. Among these factors are the following:

- At the global level, the primary supply-side factor is the basic principle governing the conduct of relations among member states of the United Nations, that states have a right to export and import small arms and light weapons.
- New production of small arms and light weapons has declined owing to a reduction in national defense budgets. However, as a result of the increase in licensed production and transfer of technology during the Cold War, a proliferation of legitimate producers of small arms and light weapons occurred. This has led to the current search for export markets in order to dispose of surplus weapons.
- Much of the light weapons surplus created by the post-Cold War reduction in armed forces has been destroyed, but an unknown number has found its way to internal conflicts from states that have ceased to exist or lost political control.
- During some armed conflicts many light weapons were distributed to citizens when self-defense units were formed by governments and gun possession laws were liberalized. When the conflicts ended the weapons remained in the hands of citizens and were available for recirculation within the society, in the region and even outside the region.
- Several UN peacekeeping and postconflict peace-building operations have resulted in the incomplete disarmament of former combatants for two reasons: peace agreements or mandates did not cover small arms and light weapons disarmament, or inadequate operational guidance or resources led to shortfalls in the implementation of mandates. Weapons left in circulation thus became available for criminal activities, recirculation, and illicit trafficking.

EARLY WARNING—CAN IT BE APPLIED TO WEAPONS FLOWS AND BUILDUPS?

Having identified basic demand and supply factors, we can address the development of early warning and specific preventive measures to counteract these causes.

FOCUSING ON THE OPERATIONAL FACTORS

National governments have long had early warning systems in place, especially in the military sphere. Early warning is the basis for any operational intelligence system designed to support military operations. But with the advent of a post-Cold War security system that features mainly multinational forces, national early warning systems have proved inadequate. The question of intelligence for UN and other multilateral military and peace operations is a subject beyond the scope of this report.⁷⁶ However, it can be said that early warning of arms flows is seen as a military intelligence matter, and has yet to be developed adequately in the context of multilateral peacekeeping and postconflict peace operations.

With the dominance of intrastate conflict, the peace operations designed to deal with it, and the refugees it has produced, the international community has begun to think seriously about and to begin to develop early warning mechanisms to prevent conflict. Few of these efforts have involved arms flows and buildups, but the body of knowledge produced is very applicable to developing early warning for the accumulations and proliferation of weapons addressed in this report.

Two experts in the field of early warning related to refugees suggest four crucial areas of activity for anticipating humanitarian crises caused by ethnic conflict. These are (1) characterization of the nature of ethnic conflict; (2) characterization of the nature of the violence; (3) characterization of the regime in power; and (4) defining the role and character of external military interveners. They hold that factors two and four should be the concern of early warning, rather than the “root causes” described in factors one and three. Focusing on the first factor “exacerbates the conflict rather than identifying the forces for overcoming it.” Factor three is difficult to do in any case and “of little help in discerning the direction of the unfolding violence.”⁷⁷

Here we revisit the “root causes” versus “immediate operational steps” debate that surfaced in the introduction to this report. “It will not be root causes but characterizing the emanations and the enhancers that will be most critical.”⁷⁸ It is also a variant of the “people kill people” versus

“guns kill people” debate that dogs any effort to develop and employ preventive actions involving weapons. Factor two, on the nature of the violence, is useful since it requires addressing the underlying nature of the actual human rights violations. “To do that, fresh assessors rather than those steeped in the intimacies of the situation may be more important.”⁷⁹ Focusing on factor two also indicates who should do the work. If the objective is to do something to form a firebreak and create an environment for conflict resolution, perhaps the “area experts” on tribe X, leader Y, or culture Z should step aside in favor of a functional expert. In the case of weapons, it would be someone who knows weapons and what they can do in various quantities and scenarios to destabilize a situation. As for factor four, identifying the external supports for the violence, this is very relevant to preventive action related to weapons buildups. In the case of those countries who supply weapons to a conflict zone, knowing who and what are supplying the support could provide leverage to apply domestic pressure in the arms-supplying country. Recently, a Belgian-supplied ammunition factory in Kenya was criticized when it was made known that this factory was supplying the exiled Hutu forces in Eastern Zaire. NGOs and political forces within Belgium were able to apply leverage and put pressure on Belgium to withdraw its technical advisors from the factory.

EARLY WARNING AS A PROCESS

Early warning is first and foremost a process—one that must be adapted for use in early detection of arms flows and accumulations.⁸⁰ The first element in the process entails a set of information tools. The basic building blocks are the gatherers, which include rights and watch organizations, humanitarian NGOs, international NGOs, the UN, international economic organizations, the media, states, and academics.⁸¹ Other information tools include the mode of collection, the categories for naming and classifying, the standards for evaluation of reliability, the elements of confidentiality that can reconcile the issue of security for the gatherers, and the mode for transmitting the information.

The second element of the process entails sharing the gathered information. This may involve considerations of security since, typically, NGOs and international agencies are reluctant to share information lest it get back to the states and threaten their workers in those states. There are also the bureaucratic conflicts and turf wars that affect all institutions to be navigated. The third element of early warning as a process entails the analysis and interpretation of the information gathered. It is well established that this phase of the process is greatly influenced by institutional

cultures and preconceptions, that in turn affect if and how the information will be shared. The fourth element is the sending phase of the early warning process when it must be decided whether the information warrants sending a signal of increased danger as well as the degree of that danger. The final step in the early warning process entails the ability to receive the signal, attend to it when it is received, determine the appropriate response, and then respond.

How might this process be adapted to detecting arms flows and accumulations? How would it differ from the experience to date in humanitarian early warning? There are some differences that create obstacles. First, humanitarian practitioners have learned at first hand how sensitive governments are to the revelation of human rights abuses associated with armed conflict. The topic of arms accumulations and flows is even more sensitive, especially since every state has the sovereign right to acquire arms to defend itself. The line between defense and offense, even genocide, can be very thin, as was seen in Rwanda.

Second, even with governmental cooperation, tracking arms buildups is made difficult due to the small size and low price of the weapons, as well as the lack of transparency associated with their transfer and accumulation. Since much of the trade is illicit, and often associated with illicit trade in drugs and other commodities, gatherers may well find that delving into this type of information will be very dangerous. Third, the nature of the behavior being uncovered and reported may present problems to the type of gatherer normally associated with current early warning efforts. For example, the lethality and hence the potential for destabilization of ordinary hunting or single shot rifles and assault rifles is sharply different from that of weapons such as mortars and rockets where the user does not see the effects. Some effort will have to be made to develop military expertise to the degree not usually found among the gatherers found in conflict zones.

But overcoming these obstacles seems worth the efforts, since monitoring and reporting arms buildups has great potential to assist in predicting the human suffering endemic in these conflicts. It could theoretically allow the policymakers to intercede in the buildup of tools of violence. There is agreement among practitioners in conflict prevention that the emphasis should be on operational indicators of violence potential. The tools of violence would seem very ripe for such an effort, especially since it is known that perpetrators of violence always precede their efforts with an arms buildup. And in most cases these buildups take enough time to allow for an early warning process to work.

The experience of the United Nations in the worst case—the Great Lakes region in Africa—indicates that even under these conditions it is pos-

sible to detect weapons flows and give warning. Officials of both UNAMIR (United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda) and the UN commission of inquiry reported that even their minimal presence allowed them to see arms buildups in progress. In the case of the commission, observers reported that just one inspector can disrupt the supply of weapons, even if only temporarily.

EARLY WARNING INDICATORS

Despite the case made above for the necessity and feasibility of monitoring arms flows and accumulations, most of the current effort to develop early warning systems to prevent conflict do not include such monitoring. Indeed it is an important objective of this report to develop such indicators in the hope that they can be integrated into the early warning systems being developed by International Alert and others.⁸²

Starting from the supply side, what types of information could be collected and shared that would give some advance warning of the outbreak or escalation of violence? Likely indicators are listed below with, in some cases, ways in which they might be used. (See also sections in chapter 2, "The Weapons" [p. 16] and "Codifying and Illustrating the Experience to Date" [p. 20].)

- One of the most tragic events related to arms buildups and conflict has been the failure of the United Nations to adequately monitor the location, collection, and disposition of arms in several postconflict peace operations. For example, in Mozambique, for a variety of reasons including a weak mandate and lack of capacity, UN personnel stood by as weapons that had been collected were redistributed and eventually contributed significantly to the destabilization of southern Africa. It would seem relatively easy, especially politically, to improve this monitoring activity.
- As noted earlier, the post-Cold War era has been marked by the creation of an extensive surplus of small arms and light weapons.⁸³ States have been very reluctant to destroy this surplus, choosing instead to export it, especially to zones of conflict. A closer monitoring of this surplus and its disposition would give very advanced warning of the arrival of excessive arms into a region or country.
- Most lists of early warning indicators mention external support as a key factor in the potential for escalation of conflict. External support from a country with extensive arms supply capacity and experience would be an early indication of arms supplies.

- As seen in South Africa, Albania, and some other cases, insecure arsenals, police stations, and other weapon storage facilities have been the source of weapons for participants in armed violence. A closer monitoring of these facilities, and especially any weapons thefts, could signal the start of an arms buildup designed to destabilize the country. In effect that is what happened in Albania as news media reported the theft of arms and their leaking into Macedonia and Kosovo.
- By its nature corruption is difficult to monitor. But getting a handle on corruption among officials responsible for weapons security would give some warning as to illicit arms trafficking and destabilizing buildups.
- The monitoring of illicit commodities networks should also include watching for arms shipments as well. In general, those involved in conflict prevention and management should be receiving information on these networks.
- Since so much of the trade in these weapons is illegal, monitoring black market prices of weapons can give a good indication of the magnitude and availability of supply. For example, an AK-47 can be purchased for a few dollars in southern Africa, but it costs more than a thousand dollars in Israel and the West Bank. In Albania, the price of AK-47s fluctuated from very high in the beginning, to very low (\$20) when the market was saturated, and climbed once again as arms dealers began to consolidate stocks and limit availability.⁸⁴
- Very little emphasis has been placed on ammunition supplies as a potential early warning indicator.⁸⁵ Unlike the weapons themselves, which can be produced in a conflict region or recirculated from existing surplus stocks in the region, ammunition for the most part must be mass produced using precision tools. It therefore is normally acquired from arms-producing states outside the region. An exception may be the presence in a conflict region of a factory producing ammunition that was previously exported under license or outright by an arms-producing state. Excessive ammunition production and export, if it were detected, would be a critical indicator of impending armed conflict, since no military operation can succeed without adequate ammunition supplies, despite adequate numbers of weapons. That has certainly been demonstrated in the Great Lakes region. The simple presence of a monitor in an airport could detect the supply of ammunition, since to be of use ammunition must be delivered in bulk.
- Monitoring borders between countries of warring factions could reveal an increase in weapons flows that would warn of an impending buildup.

- Violent attacks increasingly carried out with modern military weapons (e.g., hand grenades rather than homemade bombs) are an indicator that arms are very plentiful and becoming destabilizing. The monitoring of the weapons used by gangs would also warn of the increased availability of military-style weapons.
- The increase in legitimate acquisition of weapons by individual citizens is often a predictor of increased violence in a society, since many of these weapons become the target of centers of violence (gangs, drug dealers) seeking to acquire arms through theft.
- The potential for violence is often indicated by the sudden display in public of military-style weapons. The deadliness of an assault rifle or a belt full of hand grenades is such that reducing its presence can significantly increase the potential for conflict prevention and control.
- Government programs that distribute weapons to citizens or paramilitary organizations are a good indicator that the potential for uncontrolled violence is increasing.
- Effective monitoring of the demobilization of former combatants and redundant military personnel will provide early warning of their dissatisfaction and likely return to the violence of their former profession.

THE WAY FORWARD

These brief examples indicate that early warning is possible and would enhance the likelihood of preventing conflict. As the case studies indicate, the information gatherers involved in these conflicts have succeeded in providing some early warning. But in most cases the information was obtained with great difficulty, often too late, and in some cases at great risk to the information gatherers. What is required is increased transparency.

THE NEED FOR TRANSPARENCY

Transparency by itself is no guarantee that action will be taken, as was seen in Rwanda. Michael Lund, in his account of the 1993-94 period in Rwanda, concludes that the 500 UN troops dispatched to observe were "insufficient to be able to detect the efforts being taken by the Hutu authorities not only to avoid the implementation of the (Arusha) accords but also to recruit and arm militias ready to retake the country at the first oppor-

tunity.”⁸⁶ Other accounts, however, conclude that transparency was there, but the political will was not.⁸⁷

In the area of major conventional weapons, some progress has been made with the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Now in its fifth year of operation, the register calls upon the member states of the United Nations to report the export and import of weapons in seven categories—tanks, armored vehicles, long-range artillery, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, ships, and missiles and missile launchers. For the first time in history governments are making information public on the arms trade. Its critics often point out that this transparency has not led to the envisioned reduction in the arms trade. However, a good case can be made that transparency of transactions made international intervention during the arms buildup on Cyprus possible on a more timely and effective basis than it could have been without public knowledge of the buildup.

But as already mentioned, transparency in the production, acquisition, and proliferation of small arms and light weapons is far behind that of major conventional weapons. Among other things, since much of the flow of light weaponry is illicit, the value of simply adding this class to the UN register is problematic. But as hinted in the brief discussion of early warning indicators, there are some types of information that could be made more transparent. That alone could enhance the work of those dedicated to preventing and dampening the effects of conflict with light weaponry.

First, not all of the trade in these weapons is illicit. A first approach to monitoring and transparency is to increase information on the legitimate trade flow of arms. Perhaps some types of light weaponry could be added to the UN Register of Conventional Arms. An alternative approach is to make this type of information transparent at the regional level. In the proposed moratorium on the exporting, importing, and manufacturing of light arms in West Africa, discussed in Bamako, Mali, in March 1997, it was suggested that “governments will be able to supplement the moratorium with various additional measures. Concerning future arms acquisitions, the governments may wish to establish a subregional arms register. The register would contain pertinent information regarding the acquisition of arms necessary for uniformed forces.”⁸⁸

A second possibility is to identify in a transparent way the legitimate owners of weapons, allowing the focus to concentrate on those who would be more likely to conduct armed violence. As only one example, Brazil and Paraguay signed an agreement on 17 October 1996 requiring that both countries provide each other a monthly list of arms acquisitions by citizens.

If arms flows themselves are too difficult to monitor, at least the manufacturers and the legitimate arms traders could be made public. This

would allow the more efficient monitoring of the supply of arms and also provide a target for those political forces working against the supply of arms deemed destabilizing. In November 1997, member states of the OAS signed a Convention Against the Illicit Manufacture, Traffic, Sale, and Transfer of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Materials, which calls for the creation of a "register of manufacturers, traders, importers, and exporters" of these commodities. A similar approach has been adopted by the European Union and is proposed as an associated measure for the Bamako moratorium. The United Nations could also serve as a repository for this type of information.

A more controversial suggestion is to develop a system that registers a weapon with an international serial number upon manufacture, so that weapons can be traced to end-users. The UN Small Arms Panel recommended that the United Nations initiate a study on "the feasibility of establishing a reliable system for marking all such weapons from the time of their manufacture,"⁸⁹ and it is also part of the EU program. It should also be noted that in the United States, such transparency has allowed law enforcement officials to be increasingly effective in pinpointing and closing down important sources of weapons used in violent crime.

As previously shown, in the section on case studies (e.g., Liberia, South Africa), weapons have been seized, collected, and destroyed. Keeping a record of all of these actions, making them public, and/or exchanging such information with states in the region would accomplish several things. It would first put the focus on the fact that arms accumulations have become excessive. Second, it would provide policymakers with a better idea of the magnitude and quality of inventories. This is a part of the EU program, the OAS convention, and the Bamako moratorium. This approach is also being increasingly used with great effect in the United States, as the main sources of illicit guns are identified and eliminated.

Dealing with this problem could be helped if states took steps to clarify which types of weapons are strictly for military or police work, as a precursor to establishing control mechanisms to restrict or prohibit ownership of such weapons by civilians. As indicated, the line between weapons ownership for individual protection and for armed violence can be thin. Developing a norm that calls for the elimination of such weapons as assault rifles, hand grenades, and other military weapons in the hands of civilians could assist conflict prevention work. Making transparent who has possession of these weapons would enhance the development of such a norm.

Finally, transparency remains critical, not only to publicize the suppliers of tools of violence but also the users. There should be no let up in the adverse publicity that increasingly accompanies the human carnage re-

sulting from the use of these weapons, and the publicity should include pictures of the weapons. In the recently concluded land-mine campaign, effective use was made of the human cost of these weapons. Why is it any different when a sudden supply of hand grenades and assault rifles results in the death of thousands of civilians? In Burundi, much of the violence is committed with machetes, clubs, and knives. But the most lethal attacks are with military weapons such as grenades, rockets, assault rifles, and mortars. In the end, people kill people, but when military weapons are used, the lethality approaches the inhumane level. Where did these weapons come from? Are they under the control of responsible military units or have they been distributed to militias? Those who use such weapons, especially indiscriminately and purposefully against civilians, should be consistently condemned, in the hope that at least lower levels of violence will allow negotiations on the root causes to proceed.

THE CHALLENGES OF WEAPONS-FOCUSED POLICY ACTION DURING THE PRECONFLICT PHASE

The transformation of transparency into conflict prevention is influenced by the phase in which it is employed.⁹⁰ The phase most relevant to this report is before conflict occurs in a country or region, when the root causes begin to emerge and create tensions—a time when various groups and/or governments begin to arm themselves in the event the tensions lead to armed conflict.

Several characteristics of this scenario will make bridging the gap between transparency and conflict prevention challenging in the pre-conflict phase. First, as outlined by Lund, there are significant challenges to effective early warning in such a scenario. Conflicts in the current era are “messy,” and indicators are hard to find, let alone interpret. In addition, “in a world full of national transitions from one kind of economic and political system to another, change, tension, and political turmoil can have positive as well as negative results.” Further, in the Cold War days, the link between early warning data and the policymakers was much clearer than now. Today, the warning often comes from news reports, or humanitarian NGOs with no loyalty or connection to either national governments or international governmental organizations such as the United Nations.⁹¹

In regard to early warnings of arms buildups, it is interesting that Lund does not include any reference to arms in his list of factors that analysts have identified as local antecedents of possible genocide.⁹² Also, in a table that lists tasks and tools for each of the stages of conflict identified by Lund—“Arms Control Regimes and Their Monitoring”—no tasks or tools

are mentioned until the "near crisis" stage of unstable peace is reached.⁹³ This is a reflection of the reality that sovereign states will jealously guard the prerogative to acquire and control arms within their borders, but it also demonstrates a need to focus more attention on what can be done to restrain the tools of violence before armed violence breaks out.

However, as Lund develops a schema for matching tools with the problem on the ground, he does begin to stress the importance of arms in preventing disputes from becoming violent. His research indicates that disputes become violent or peaceful depending on one or more of the following six deficiencies or need factors: (1) lack of restraints on violence; (2) lack of a process; (3) lack of resources; (4) lack of solutions; (5) lack of incentives; and (6) lack of trust. He goes on to point out that most often, intermediaries are not dealing with the most appropriate deficiencies of a scenario. He cites the example of Yugoslavia in 1991, where there was widespread evidence that the arming of militias was imminent or actually under way in the republics, a development clearly avoided by the international community as they focused on other factors.⁹⁴

Later in his assessment Lund matches tools to each of these six deficiencies. For the first deficiency, that of the lack of restraints on violence—there are few limitations restricting the hostile parties from resorting to armed force—he sees the task as depriving parties of arms, and providing protection against the use of arms. The tools are less specific, but do include enforced demilitarized zones and military assistance. Preventive diplomacy at this stage can "reduce, restrain, or regulate the weapons that might be used in the future through some form of disarmament, arms control, and/or nonproliferation enforced by international agreements." Such efforts are hampered by a fact already stated, that is, the particular characteristics of the class of weapon used by the combatants—small arms and light weapons. Their acquisition will be more easily concealed than a buildup of major conventional weapons, especially given the post-Cold War supply networks. Second, in this phase of the conflict, little blood has been shed, no war weariness has set in. The call to disarm comes at the exact moment when it is least likely to be heeded.⁹⁵ Third, in a situation where a state's authority has collapsed but conflict has not yet occurred, multilateral intervention accompanied by some sort of international mandate to disarm the warring parties will likely not have occurred. Even if the international community succeeds in deploying a preventive force, a mandate to disarm is less likely to be approved by the state accepting the force on its territory.

But even with a weak mandate UN officials in Rwanda detected and reported to their superiors in New York the impending genocide, and their reports included information on the arming of militias and the

stocking of arms caches. The UN force asked permission to preempt the disaster by raiding these weapons caches, a request denied as being beyond the mandate. UN observers were monitoring, and in some cases intercepting, arms flowing into Rwanda, but were again denied permission to take action. The resulting catastrophe did have the effect of shifting significant attention to a similar situation as it developed in Burundi.

The aforementioned UN commission of inquiry was formed as a result of revelations by Human Rights Watch of arms flows to Hutu militias in Zaire, arms that were in turn being used to attack Tutsi in Burundi. The mediation efforts of former President Julius K. Nyerere of Tanzania also included insistence that no further arms be added to an already violent situation in Burundi.⁹⁶ At this writing the violence continues. Although no solution is in sight, a catastrophe on the scale of Rwanda and an all-out civil war has not occurred. Some hope remains that violence can be reduced to a level that will allow the root causes of this conflict to be addressed in earnest.

Another preconflict scenario is that of crime and lawlessness in a country or region that has recently undergone major reforms in the direction of democratic government, as in the previously discussed cases of South Africa and El Salvador. Both of these countries are suffering from a massive diffusion of military-style light weapons into the hands of criminal elements, and have identified the massive numbers of weapons available as the primary cause of the violence. The problem is exacerbated by the lack of a sufficiently large, well-trained, and uncorrupt police force to deal with the increase in armed violence. What starts out as nonpolitical crime can soon be met with a vigilante-style response, leading to organized centers of violence, centers that can then be coopted by drug traffickers. From here a more dangerous situation could develop with the politicization of such groups and the outbreak of civil war. In this scenario, disarmament action must be taken prior to the escalation described. In southern Africa, states in the region have begun to discuss the coordination of such disarmament measures as weapons collection programs, border policing, and other tools to stem the cross-national flow of weapons.⁹⁷ In El Salvador community groups, with support from the government, have been conducting voluntary weapons collection programs and publicizing the dangerous effects of these weapons.⁹⁸

As these examples illustrate, preconflict disarmament is not restricted to those situations in which the parties are moving from stable to unstable peace for the first time. All three areas—the Great Lakes, Southern Africa, and El Salvador—have lived through a period of armed violence and can arguably be put in the postconflict category. However, at least for South Africa and El Salvador, the recent elections and move toward

democracy can be seen as creating a peaceful environment, now being disrupted as a result of increased weapons diffusion. Neither state has enough capacity to deal with the situation. But as long as it remains a situation of crime and violence short of civil war, multilateral intervention and disarmament approaches are politically risky options.

SPECIFIC POLICY ACTIONS

The way forward will be prosecuted by a variety of individuals and organizations and, as in the case of the land-mines campaign, a primary condition for success is that the international community coordinate its activities. However, in developing solutions for problems at the stage outlined in this report, certain tasks fall on specific components and members of the international community. In the early days of dealing with the problem of weapons buildup, specific policy actions can be associated with specific actors.

UNITED NATIONS

Since the post-Cold War security system now includes United Nations peace operations, it makes sense to examine how these operations could be reformed to provide more early warning and, more important, a framework for action based on increasingly transparent information on arms buildups.⁹⁹

Peace Operations

One of the first places that this transparency and early warning could be implemented is in UN peace operations. In the conclusion to the extensive UNIDIR (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research) project on disarmament and peace operations, Gamba and Potgeiter highlighted the importance of information gathering.

In order to manage arms during peace missions, military commanders need to be able to detect the movement of belligerent forces, determine the location of hidden arms caches, and anticipate the plans and tactics of those who intend to violate agreements and threaten the execution of the mission mandate. This boils down to a need for a sound information gathering, assessment, and distribution system. . . . Accurate warning will allow more effective counter measures and provide an opportunity to disrupt threatening be-

havior. . . . Despite the importance of this element . . . , information gathering in the field—even as it relates to the enforcement of consensual disarmament—has been neglected at best or shunned, at worst.¹⁰⁰

How can this be improved? The first focal point would be the mandates of these operations. Given the importance of arms flows and buildups on conflict, any mandate should give the UN the capacity to monitor and report such activity. The list of early warning indicators and transparency options previously developed is a good place to start.

Then the UN forces should be given the mandate to collect and destroy all weapons related to the conflict. The experience of the International Force (IFOR) in the former Yugoslavia is instructive in this regard. Under the Dayton Accords, specific time tables were established for turning in weapons, after which all discovered caches and seizures from persons would be the property of IFOR. A November 1996 incident typifies actions related to this mandate. Fighting broke out when Muslims saw Serbs destroying their homes in the demilitarized zone, took up arms from previously hidden caches, and attacked the Serbs in the demilitarized zone. The Serbs responded. After separating the parties, the U.S. Army troops in that zone destroyed the Muslim weapons.¹⁰¹ Interviews with recently returned IFOR officers reveal that this and similar incidents are commonplace and require ingenuity, patience, and care in defining eligibility for possession of different types of weapons. For example, at the time of the above incident no specific list existed of weapons authorized to be carried by police in the demilitarized zone. In one case they requested permission to carry hand grenades, since they regularly did so before the accords. This was denied.

In an address to the Council on Foreign Relations in December 1996, NATO and IFOR Commander General George Joulwan remarked on the frustrations of dealing with the collection of weapons. He stated that he had just implemented a new IFOR policy to destroy all weapons seized, regardless of owner, a policy that has resulted in the destruction of over \$25 million in operational military equipment.¹⁰² Such mandates and policies serve to focus attention on the tools of violence, an area more susceptible to action and a prerequisite for dealing with the intractable root causes.

Mandates that would allow for more action related to armaments—monitoring, collection and destruction—are only one aspect of the solution. Also needed is a change in the focus of those in the UN bureaucracy charged with managing conflicts. Very often their conservative approach prevents critical information on arms flows from being used for conflict prevention. As only one small example, the UN Small Arms Panel requested information on the arms being used by participants in the ongoing UN

peace operations. Such a list was to be used to define the types of arms in question so as to avoid an academic debate on the definition of small arms and light weapons. The situation center of the UNDPKO (United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations) could not task its various headquarters in the field for this information, viewing it outside any of the existing mandates.

A third action could be the creation of a specific department dedicated to arms issues at UNDPKO in New York and in each peace operation headquarters in the field. In New York this department could focus on creating transparency, in the form of a reporting system that focuses on the types of information previously discussed in this report. It also could develop a handbook that described the various weapons typically used, so that UN personnel, and all other information gatherers in the field, could be better prepared at least to recognize when lethal weapons were being accumulated and displayed in the streets. In addition, a handbook could be developed that instructed field personnel in how to destroy these weapons.

All of these actions would serve the critical overall purpose of emphasizing the importance of weapons in the outbreak and exacerbation of conflict. They would be huge steps forward in developing an international norm against the acquisition, accumulation, and proliferation of lethal military-style weapons by civilians. A comparison with how the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) dealt with the antipersonnel landmines issue makes the point. DHA has a home page on the Internet and arguably serves as the focal point for most of the action on dealing with antipersonnel mines, for NGOs as well as national governments and inter-governmental organizations. They also are very active in publicizing the negative effects of this weapon. A similar UN organizational home is needed for small arms and light weapons. Perhaps this could be the first priority of the new Department for Disarmament and Arms Regulation (UNDDR) at the United Nations.

An Active Department for Disarmament and Arms Regulation

A global consensus has emerged surrounding the linkage between excessive arms accumulations and the outbreak and exacerbation of conflict. This consensus should provide the political will for the member states to task the UN to at last take on an enhanced role in the variety of weapons-focused responses that have been outlined in this report. The reform plan document, *Renewing the United Nations*,¹⁰³ states that "nations everywhere have come to recognize their stake in the success of multilateral negotiations and the monitoring of weapons developments. As a consequence, the United Nations has taken center stage in the worldwide effort to limit both weapons and conflict." This report also identifies "the flow of conventional

weapons and small arms into the hands of civilians . . . as a new danger.” Although the UNDDR will continue to perform its traditional role as support agency for the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) process and the Register of Conventional Arms, it can contribute more substantively in the area of small arms and light weapons. Specifically, it should establish an effective monitoring capability to identify and inform the international community of those situations in which weapons-focused solutions will be most effective. Also, since the collection and destruction of surplus arms is becoming more widespread, the UNDDR could take the lead in coordinating the expertise needed to conduct such operations, especially those cases that occur separate from official peace operations.

Other UN Actions

In addition to addressing peace operations, the UN panel on small arms made several other recommendations for action in its *Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms*.¹⁰⁴

- The UN should adopt a proportional and integrated approach to security and development, including the identification of appropriate assistance for the internal security of states where conflicts come to an end and where serious problems of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons have to be dealt with urgently.
- The UN should support, with the assistance of the donor community, all appropriate postconflict initiatives related to disarmament and demobilization, such as the disposal and destruction of weapons, including weapons turn-in programs sponsored locally by governmental and nongovernmental organizations.
- The UN should urge greater cooperation between states and organizations such as Interpol and the World Customs Organization to combat illicit trafficking in weapons.
- The UN should initiate studies on:
 - the feasibility of establishing a reliable system for marking all small arms and light weapons from the time of their manufacture;
 - the feasibility of restricting the manufacture and trade of such weapons to the manufacturers and dealers authorized by states, and of establishing a database of such authorized manufacturers and dealers;
 - all aspects of the problem of ammunition and explosives.
- The UN should consider the possibility of convening an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects.

MULTILATERAL POLICIES

The international nature of the problems defined in this report means that many specific policies must be developed and executed at the multilateral level. While some of these policies are being developed in regional organizations, some remain undeveloped at this time and are put forward here as suggestive.

Regional Cooperation

As already indicated, regional organizations have begun to recognize and deal with the role of arms in conflict. Some of these activities include intelligence sharing and transparency, cooperative cross-border weapons collection programs, the coordination of domestic armaments regulations (e.g., common end-user certificate), and in the case of West Africa, a moratorium on weapons acquisitions by governments. In both the OAS and West African effort, an important innovation has been developed, namely, the establishment of national commissions to deal with problems stemming from small arms and light weapons. These commissions serve to formalize the importance of arms in conflict prevention, and can serve as the focal point for the policy prescriptions that are developed, starting with transparency measures.

Embargoes

In some cases it will be necessary for the United Nations or regional organizations to conduct an embargo on weapons and ammunition.¹⁰⁵ Despite the obstacles to such actions, many of the suggestions made in this report could enhance the likelihood of success. This is especially true of the suggested enhancements in the area of transparency. The overall increase in awareness and knowledge (e.g., types of weapons) could improve the effectiveness of this tool. Further, should the increased attention on weapons lead to the development of norms against the excessive accumulation of this class of weapon, the political will that is often missing in such embargoes might be more present. The Great Lakes region, and other places, have demonstrated that even a few UN observers on the ground can make a difference. We should not succumb to those who say it is no use intervening unless there is enough force to control the entire situation. No such levels of force will be forthcoming, either from the supplier of such forces or the recipient states whose sovereignty will be put in jeopardy. This is especially true in the early stages of unstable peace. Blue helmets at airfields make a difference.

Moratoria

The UN panel on small arms focused on the success of the Mali operation in several places, especially the regional effort to impose a moratorium and urge suppliers to cooperate. It recommended the adoption and implementation of regional and subregional moratoria on the transfer and manufacture of small arms and light weapons.

Focus on Ammunition

Another multilateral armaments-specific measure is to focus on ammunition. Clearly the post-Cold War surplus will insure that weapons are available to fuel conflicts for some time to come. But ammunition is a different story. For one thing, it requires fairly high technology to mass produce ammunition that is reliable. Most ammunition manufacturing equipment has been built by the industrialized countries. Where did they export such machinery? Can it be located and monitored, or perhaps acquired and destroyed? Further, ammunition in quantities that make a difference is heavy and bulky. It is easier to detect in these quantities. The opposite side of the lethality of an assault rifle is that its rapid fire capabilities also require constant supply of ammunition. Much more can be done to develop this option.

Security for Sources of Weapons and Ammunition

In those situations where a stable peace prevails, providing more security for obvious sources of weapons and ammunition is another approach. In the Albanian situation, the source of the tools of violence was government arsenals that opened up when major defections occurred in the armed forces. South Africa and countries of the former Soviet Union have had similar problems. Perhaps a more concentrated effort could be made to safeguard such obvious sources of the tools of violence, either through an international capacity-building effort or an international control regime.

Agency Coordination

The successful actions to demobilize and disarm, and in fact end, the conflict in Mali, owe a great deal to the excellent coordination among the participating development, humanitarian, conflict resolution, and disarmament policy organizations. Much needs to be done in other operations to streamline and improve the interaction between these bureaucracies, both governmental and nongovernmental.

Reward Parties that Show Restraint in Acquiring and Using Weapons

In many conflicts the international community has identified the “bad guys” or rogue groups that are responsible for the armed violence. Taking sides is very common, despite the quest for neutrality. It is understandable that some single out support for oppositionist groups as the major factor in tensions escalating to violence, especially when that support is weapons. “Oppositionist groups should instead be encouraged to use nonviolent means to keep pressure on the regime, thereby allowing their cause to retain the moral high ground and thus international support.”¹⁰⁶ But this approach puts a moral responsibility on the international community to publicize such restraint and reward the oppositionists in some way. But the international community has a way of neglecting hot spots unless they are hot. How has the leader of the Albanians in Kosovo been rewarded for his restraint? This approach also goes against one of the basic principles of international law, that the oppressed have an inherent right to rise up against their oppressors. Every effort to deal with armaments in the United Nations faces this hurdle. This is not to say that attempts to control the supply of arms to oppositionists is not warranted. Rather, expanding such *ad hoc* efforts to some type of international or even regional peacekeeping regime will be challenging.

NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

One of the characteristics of the land-mine campaign that enhanced the potential for success was the focus on a set of actions that national governments could sign on to, namely the total ban on the manufacture, use or export of antipersonnel land mines. Although developing a similar set of goals for national governments in the area of small arms and light weapons is inherently more difficult, the work of the United Nations has produced what in effect is a model of responsible behavior that, if adopted by states, would contribute significantly to the prevention of conflict.

As previously mentioned, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice of the UN Economic and Social Council has developed a model with five common elements:

- Regulations relating to firearm safety and storage
- Appropriate penalties for misuse or unlawful possession of firearms
- Programs to encourage citizens to surrender illegal, unsafe, or unwanted firearms

- A responsible and effective licensing system
- A recordkeeping system for distribution and marking of firearms

In addition, the UN Small Arms Panel developed many recommendations that add to this model of responsible behavior. The following are among them:

- All states should implement the recommendations contained in the guidelines for international arms transfers produced by consensus in the United Nations Disarmament Commission.
- All weapons that are not under legal civilian possession, and that are not required for the purposes of national defense and internal security, should be collected and destroyed by states as expeditiously as possible.
- All states should determine in their national laws and regulations which arms are permitted for civilian possession and the conditions under which they can be used.
- All states should ensure that they have in place adequate laws, regulations, and administrative procedures to exercise effective control over the legal possession of small arms and light weapons and over their transfer.
- States emerging from conflict should impose or reimpose licensing requirements on all civilian possession of small arms and light weapons on their territory.
- All states should exercise restraint with respect to the transfer of surplus military weapons and consider the possibility of destroying such weapons.
- All states should ensure the safeguarding of such weapons against loss through theft or corruption, in particular from storage facilities.

This list can become a well-known set of demand-side targets to be used by donor states in developing capacity-building assistance.

NGO COMMUNITY

The recommended actions for the UN, regional organizations, and national governments become the source of an agenda for action by the NGO community. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the provision of much needed information and data.

NGOs as Data Providers

A comparison with the success of environmental and humanitarian NGOs, and those NGOs that participated in the land-mines campaign, is instructive. In all these cases national governments came to rely on NGOs for data critical to the policy process. NGOs became allies in a coordinated process because of their ability to provide governments and international organizations with information. NGOs addressing the problem of small arms and light weapons are just beginning such an effort. The policy agenda laid out for the UN gives NGOs new opportunities to actively participate in solving these problems through supplying critical information. As one example, it appears that a focus on ammunition may be fruitful. Arguably it may be easier to deal with the fewer number of ammunition sources than the weapons themselves. Which firms manufacture ammunition? Where in the developing world are the ammunition plants exported during the Cold War? How is ammunition shipped? What does it look like? This type of information is hard to come by in the usual published sources. It is interesting to note that the report of the UN Small Arms Panel includes a table on the production of assault rifles (see above, p. 24), a table produced not by governments but by the independent Institute for Research on Small Arms in International Security.¹⁰⁷ Just a few years earlier attempts to insert similar types of information into a report on the UN Register of Conventional Arms were dismissed out of hand.¹⁰⁸

Broaden the Coalition

This report shows evidence that weapons-focused policies are inexorably tied in with the larger issues of development and human rights. Despite this, only now is action being taken to create the type of coalition that will enhance the very necessary contribution of NGOs in the solution of these problems. Illustrative of this was the annual Disarmament Week program organized by the NGO Committee on Disarmament in October 1997. Except for representatives of the well-known coalition on land mines, almost all of the presenters and commentators came from the traditional arms control and disarmament community, and from the United States. Typically these NGOs do not have firsthand information from the field. What is needed in such forums is to have the full range of development and humanitarian NGOs in the field make the case that human security is being diminished by the presence of too many weapons. Donor states are now looking for model projects to demonstrate the utility of arms-focused policies. Only a broad-based coalition of NGOs can contribute to this process.

Early Warning

In their effort to be neutral, NGOs have a bias toward not being involved in things military. The increasing casualties suffered by humanitarian NGOs has begun to change this orientation. In many cases these NGOs are in place, on the ground, and could be the source of early warning, not just on the factors related to starvation and health epidemics but also to arms buildups as well. In Albania neutral observers observing the black market for arms noted how the prices for an AK-47 rose and fell, one of several indicators of how many such weapons are on the market. It may be that NGOs do not do this because they lack familiarity with weapons and their means of transfer into a zone of potential conflict. Some education in this dimension could provide the remedy. In addition, NGOs in a position where they could act as monitors could make use of the early warning indicators suggested in this report.

ACADEMICS

As has been demonstrated in this report, action is being taken at all levels of the international community to lessen the effects of excessive and destabilizing accumulations of light weaponry. In many cases these policies, both actual and proposed, are based on a general sense that the weapons are a problem. This general sense that arms and conflict are linked is enough to generate the actions described in this report. But, as with other policy issues, better knowledge of the causal links between arms acquisitions and transfers, and conflict would clearly enhance the solutions in those circumstances, as it would allow the more precise application of tools best suited for success. Additionally, as long as weapons-focused policies negatively affect certain actors (e.g., governments stockpiling weapons for future contingencies, arms dealers), these actors will resist cooperation by citing the lack of evidence that weapons are the problem. In short, despite a great deal of information on conflict situations, some of which appeared earlier in the case studies in this report, academics need to get much closer to a theory of conflict that can better pinpoint the role of weapons.

Among the questions that need answers are the following:¹⁰⁹

- How can a destabilizing accumulation be defined early enough to be of value in conflict prevention?
- If arms accumulations are destabilizing under certain conditions, can these conditions be generalized to adequately provide early warning to policymakers?

- Are there particular weapons that are more destabilizing than others, under certain conditions?

The challenges involved in such research should not be underestimated. Many of the questions cannot be answered without gathering more data on specific cases, field data that will often be dangerous to collect. Also, the lack of significant and useful theoretical findings from the extensive research on the causes of war is sobering.

4

CONCLUSION

IN THIS REPORT, a variety of prescriptions have been put forward in support of preventing conflict by focusing on the tools of violence, those small arms and light weapons that have been unleashed to fuel the ongoing conflicts of the world.

PRINCIPLES

Behind all of the suggestions in this report lies a new set of observations and principles related to conflict prevention, management, and resolution that may serve to guide policymaking.¹¹⁰

- *Tools should match the phase of the conflict.* The specific disarmament instruments employed will vary by the phase of conflict in which they are used. In the midst of conflict, forcible disarmament may work, but

it would be inappropriate in a postconflict stage. Conversely, voluntary weapons collection programs may be effective in a postconflict situation but more difficult during conflict.

- *The range of expected outcomes should be wide.* The objectives of disarmament must cover a wide range of outcomes beyond simply lowering the number of arms possessed by persons and groups participating in the violence. In many cases reducing the visibility of arms can contribute significantly to bringing stability to a local situation that will enhance other conflict resolution initiatives. Even temporary possession of arms by a neutral party can have positive effects.
- *Emphasize the symbolic and political value of disarmament.* Although disarmament can lower the capability of the parties to conduct armed violence, equal emphasis should be given to the symbolic and political nature of disarmament actions. In the case of Srebrenica, for example, turning in weapons did not alter the military balance. But it did mean that at least temporarily the parties accepted the deal—no visible guns, no slaughter. In Northern Ireland, where the decommissioning of weapons is a principal issue, a commentator partial to the IRA put it like this: “No one has convincingly argued that decommissioning is a decisive security measure, however desirable it might be. Indeed security personnel are clear—mostly in private, some in public—that this is essentially a political issue. Secondly, it is a voluntary exercise, that logically and necessarily requires the cooperation of those holding the weapons. The governments and their vast security apparatus have been pursuing a decommissioning policy for years, seeking out and confiscating illegal weapons wherever they can be found. Unionists should not confuse their public by conflating two entirely different exercises.”¹¹¹ A political focus is also appropriate for voluntary weapons collection programs, that are often criticized as ineffective because the drug dealers, gang or guerrilla leaders do not participate. These programs continue to be popular expressly because of their political and symbolic effect.
- *Norms against possession and accumulation of light weaponry are underdeveloped.* The norms that evolved in regard to weapons of mass destruction, and some major conventional weapons such as surface-to-surface missiles, do not exist for the small arms and light weapons that dominate today’s violence. This means that an important aspect of any disarmament policy is the promotion of norms against accumulation of weapons that can seriously complicate the prevention or resolution of conflict. The multitude of policy actions against antipersonnel land mines serves as a guide to what must be done. For light weaponry the task is all the

harder since a norm exists in favor of possessing such weapons, either as part of every country's army or by individuals who fear for their safety. One technique that is being used more often is the public destruction of weapons that have been collected. Another is making public the damage from this class of weapon.

- *Postconflict demobilization and reintegration are critical.* It is becoming clear that a successful demobilization process in those countries where wars have ended is a critical link to preventing the reoccurrence of conflict. This is a holistic exercise in that disarmament is only the initial step to success, as is seen in comparing Mali with Mozambique. In Mali, a variety of United Nations agencies put together a coordinated program that insured, through well-funded reintegration programs, that disarmament would not be reversed. This was not the case in Mozambique. Disarmament in these situations has to be conducted in cooperation with development experts, police, and judicial personnel. This also means that experts from outside the region should become more interdisciplinary. The usual suspects from the Cold War arms control and disarmament effort are not enough. The issue to be resolved is much more than the matter of too many weapons. The increased role of the World Bank and other lending institutions in demobilization programs is encouraging. The new logic calls for emphasis on preventing the former combatant from taking up his or her gun as a result of a failed demobilization and reintegration effort.
- *Awareness of cross-cultural sensitivities is important.* Coping with weapons of mass destruction and, in most cases, major conventional weapons has been done in a monocultural fashion, as a missile is a missile, regardless of context. This has allowed the International Atomic Energy Agency, and supplier regimes like the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Nuclear Suppliers Group to act with a set of globally applicable procedures. With small arms and light weapons, this is less possible. Disarmament requires a more sensitive awareness of the role of these weapons in the history and culture of the region. Even if agreement is reached that such weapons must be taken out of the hands of combatants and citizens and that international humanitarian law applies in all cases, the disarmament approach taken will be affected by this culture.
- *Preventing conflict through disarmament is not cheap.* The world has now learned that a disarmament plan will not accomplish the goal without resources. Too often the disarmament "annex" to a peace operation has been an afterthought. The example of Mozambique has been

mentioned. The conflict and failed disarmament in Liberia is testimony to a totally unrealistic plan, made even worse by incompetent and corrupt execution by the responsible parties. In 1993 and 1994 in Rwanda the United Nations knew that militias were arming for genocide, but a restrictive mandate and lack of resources resulted in no action. It is encouraging that the IFOR mission in Bosnia has the resources to execute the critical disarmament and arms control components of the plan.

A FINAL WORD

The goal of the Carnegie Commission is to push the international community to "do better" in preventing conflict. This report contributed to this effort by bringing together in one place what we collectively know about the role of small arms and light weapons in conflict. The report describes what is being done and can be done in the way of policies to alleviate and prevent the negative consequences that are there for all to see. Some of these policies are more developed than others. It is hoped that in the latter case, this report is suggestive enough to assist those who would contribute to alleviating conflict through weapons-focused approaches. Developing policy tools in this field is proving to be difficult, given the challenges to the interests of the myriad of actors that must participate in the solutions. But there now is a way forward, with roles for all components and actors within the international community. A campaign analogous to the land-mine campaign is one answer.¹¹² Just as important is the incremental day-to-day work such as developing data, collecting and destroying weapons, and improving national controls on arms exports that collectively will move us closer to reducing deadly conflict. What is clear is that the citizens of the countries experiencing the violence are crying out for solutions. They can no longer be ignored.

APPENDIX

THE WORK OF NGOs AND ACADEMICS

THE FOLLOWING LISTS AND DESCRIBES some of the work being done by NGOs and academics. A complete listing is to be found at www.prepcom.org

NGOs

NGOs from around the world are participating in researching and promoting solutions to the problems created by the accumulation of light weapons.

- The British American Security Information Council (BASIC) has a major project on light weapons. Its primary functions include the development of a community of experts through the distribution of research findings and meetings, and the promotion of solutions to the problems created by light weapons accumulations.
- The Arms Project of Human Rights Watch has pioneered field research into illicit flows of light weapons into major conflict areas that include the Great Lakes region in Africa, Angola, and Colombia.

- The Bonn International Center for Conversion has a light weapons project that conducts research on surplus light weapons, with a focus on their collection and disposal. Regional foci include Africa and Central America. In conjunction with the Program for Arms Control, Disarmament, and Conversion at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, the project maintains a database on events involving small arms and light weapons.
- The Federation of American Scientists' Arms Sales Monitoring Project has a new project entitled Monitoring the Diffusion of Light Weapons. It consists of advocacy designed to develop a campaign to "shut down the black market" in small arms and light weapons. The project also maintains a database on the black market in this class of weapon.
- The Institute for Security Studies in Pretoria, South Africa, launched a major project in 1996 entitled Towards Collaborative Peace. Its first objective is to identify and understand the flows of the illegal proliferation of light weapons across the borders of the seven countries in Southern Africa and to propose local and regional control measures to contain these flows. A second objective is to document clearly the way in which weapons availability promotes the emergence of a culture of violence in these regions, and to propose practical and educational measures to reverse this trend.
- The Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis in New Delhi has a project entitled Light Weapons Proliferation in South Asia. This institute conducts field research in the region on the linkage between drugs and weapons trafficking, types of weapons available and actors involved in the illicit trade in light weapons, and the development of concrete policy measures to combat these phenomena at the local, regional, and international levels.
- International Alert, an NGO based in the United Kingdom, works in partnership with local and international organizations to promote alternatives to violent conflict. Its Light Weapons Project focuses on armed conflicts in Central Africa. The project seeks to support alternatives to armed conflict through advocacy of weapons containment measures at community, regional, and international levels. In July 1997 it cosponsored the conference Light Weapons and Peace-building in Central Africa. The report from the conference was published in November 1997.
- The Program for Arms Control, Disarmament, and Conversion (PACDC) at the Monterey Institute of International Studies focuses exclusively on the light weapons issue. Specific projects include the maintenance of an event database that chronicles the types of weapons being used in conflicts, their effects and modes of acquisition, and the policies being used in ongoing conflicts to deal with excessive and destabilizing accumulations of this class of weapon. PACDC focuses in particular on the various voluntary weapons turn-in (so called buy-back) programs being conducted throughout the world.

- The Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers (NISAT) is an NGO coalition composed of four organizations in Norway, formed in December 1997. The four organizations are the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), the International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), the Norwegian Red Cross (NorCross), and Norwegian Church Aid (NCA). Their goals include the following:
 - Formulating and advocating the adoption of standards and agreements by which countries control, register, or ban certain kinds of small arms transfers;
 - Providing information and documentation on small arms transfer;
 - Supporting regional initiatives such as the West Africa (Bamako) moratorium proposed by the government of Mali;
 - Stimulating and supporting networks and institutions among interested organizations, researchers, and officials involved in local, regional, or global efforts to limit small arms transfers.

Based in Oslo, the NISAT group uses the following methods:

- Building and supporting collaborative networks and information exchange among the many existing local, regional, and international actors working to control or limit small arms transfers;
- Undertaking research, studies, and information gathering to identify the scale of the problem and define optimal goals and working methods for addressing it;
- Organizing experts meetings, seminars, and conferences to explore the political, conceptual, and cognitive problem;
- Arranging media exposure to mobilize support and action;
- Providing moral and financial support to local and regional arms transfer campaigns and moratoria.
- Project Ploughshares promotes disarmament and demilitarization, the peaceful resolution of political conflict, and the pursuit of security based on equity, justice, and a sustainable environment. Together with agencies in Sweden and Germany, Ploughshares cosponsors the International Resource Group on Disarmament and Security in the Horn of Africa (IRG). A small arms project is now under development, in cooperation with the Bonn International Center for Conversion. The primary objectives of Project Ploughshare are to:
 - Promote indigenous study and analysis of arms diffusion with the subregion, with particular attention to its humanitarian consequences and the implications for subregional security and stability;
 - Generate policy options related to national, subregional and regional control measures and for enhanced transparency in military and security matters;
 - Establish an indigenous research community and mechanism for gathering data on arms flows into and within the subregion;
 - Generate a publicly accessible database on small arms literature, the humanitarian and security effects of small arms accumulation, and arms flows.

- Saferworld is an independent foreign affairs research group based in the UK and working to identify, develop, and publicize more effective approaches to tackling and preventing armed conflict. Saferworld is currently focusing on two particular initiatives that relate closely to the proposed international campaign on light weapons.

First, Saferworld is developing a program to take forward and build support for the proposals contained in the EU Programme for Preventing and Combating Illicit Trafficking in Conventional Arms and to formulate an agenda for the EU member states to implement the program. In particular the program will focus on developing proposals in three main areas:

- How EU member states can combat illicit trafficking through and from their territories;
- How EU member states can assist African countries to strengthen their capacity to control arms flows within their borders and across regions;
- How EU member states can ensure that security and development assistance is provided within an integrated, coherent policy framework.

The project organized a seminar in South Africa in May 1998 with regional governments to develop policies that can address the problems associated with the spread and misuse of light weapons. Through this program, Saferworld is also assisting the World Council of Churches, European governments seeking to form a coalition that can better attack the light weapons problem, and the International Resources Group of the Horn of Africa.

Second, Saferworld, together with a coalition of European NGOs, is seeking to encourage the adoption and implementation of a restrictive EU code of conduct on the arms trade.

- The World Council of Churches (WCC) Programme to Overcome Violence (POV) works to build a culture of peace through practical means to overcome violence at different levels of society, encouraging the churches to play a leading role. Its current focus is the Peace to the City Campaign, which highlights creative initiatives to overcome violence around the world, with the goal of building connections, sharing resources, and expanding efforts to build peace with justice. A consultation took place in May 1998 in Rio de Janeiro with a small group of experts on small arms and light weapons. The aim of the consultation was to learn about the different initiatives taking place in regard to microdisarmament, and to develop a framework for the WCC and a plan of concrete actions for further work.

ACADEMIC WORK

- The Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project of the Geneva-based United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) has produced a series of case studies on Somalia, Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, Bosnia and Croatia, Southern

Africa, Cambodia, Angola and Namibia, Liberia, Nicaragua and El Salvador, and Haiti. UNIDIR's basic premise is that "the combination of internal conflicts with the proliferation of light weapons has marked [UN] peace operations since 1990." Although recognizing that social and political development issues are critical sources of violence, they have as a mandate a focus on the material vehicles for violence, in particular the elimination of excess weapons and munitions.

- The entire issue of *Disarmament: A Periodic Review by the United Nations*. Volume XIX, No. 2, 1996.
- Jeffrey Boutwell, Michael T. Klare, and Laura Reed, eds., *Lethal Commerce: The Global Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons*. Cambridge, MA: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1995.
- Andrew Latham, "The Light Weapons Problem: Causes, Consequences, and Policy Options," in Andrew Latham, ed., *Multilateral Approaches to Non-Proliferation*. Proceedings of the 4th Canadian Non-Proliferation Workshop. Toronto: York University, 1996, pp. 33-54.
- Edward J. Laurance, with Sarah Meek, *The New Field of Micro-Disarmament: Addressing the Proliferation and Buildup of Small Arms and Light Weapons*. Brief 7. Bonn: Bonn International Center for Conversion, September 1996.
- Christopher Louise, *The Social Impacts of Light Weapons Availability and Proliferation*. Discussion Paper No. 59. Geneva: UNRISD, 1995.
- Michael Renner, *Small Arms, Big Impact: The Next Challenge of Disarmament*. Washington, DC: The Worldwatch Institute, October 1997.
- "Small Arms and Light Weapons: The Epidemic Spread of Conflicts." Chapter Three. *Conversion Survey 1997*. Bonn: Bonn International Center for Conversion, 1997.
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- Jasjit Singh, ed., *Light Weapons and International Security*. Delhi: Indian Pugwash Society and British American Security Information Council, 1995.

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1. Jane E. Holl. *Progress Report*. Washington DC: Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, July 1995, p. 4.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. *Supplement to An Agenda for Peace: Position Paper of the Secretary-General on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations*. A/50/60-S/1995/1, 3 January 1995, p. 14. New York.

5. Jeff Sallot. "Axworthy Expanding War on Weapons," *Globe and Mail*, September 25, 1997.

6. *Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms*. Report #A/52/298 from the Secretary General to the General Assembly. New York: United Nations, 27 August 1997. This panel will be referred to in this report as the UN Small Arms Panel.

7. See Raymond Bonner, "After Land Mine Triumph, Groups Combat Small Arms," *New York Times*, 7 January 1998.

8. The newly forming Wassenaar Arrangement, a loose-knit collective of more than 30 arms-producing states, also has as its goal making the arms trade more transparent among its members.

9. Attributed to John Simpson in Swadesh Rana, *Small Arms and Intrastate Conflict*. Research Paper #34. Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 1995, p. 8.

10. These conflicts are regularly described in such sources as the yearbook of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Aggregate data on the number of these conflicts, and the trend in terms of frequency, are not discussed in this report. Rather, the starting point for the report is the fact that many of these conflicts are being addressed by the international community. The case studies in chapter 2 of this report explain their nature in more detail and include descriptions of how small arms and light weapons relate to the outbreak and exacerbation of such conflicts.

11. *Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms*, p. 13.

12. It is well known that some of the intrastate conflicts that are the subject of international attention involve the use of major conventional weapons such as artillery, heavy mortars, and tanks. The justification for drawing the distinction between the typology below and these major weapons is twofold. First, despite their destructive power, they are not normally the decisive weapon in these conflicts and do not cause the bulk of the casualties. Second, to the extent that they are involved (e.g., in the former Yugoslavia prior to the signing of the Dayton Accords), their characteristics are such that previously developed approaches can be and are applied.

13. *Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms*, pp. 11-12.

14. Given the extensive effort to deal with antipersonnel land mines in recent years, this report will not include them. The campaign that led to the treaty to ban land mines is relevant to this report and is cited in several places.

15. *Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms*, p. 2. Foreword by the secretary-general.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

17. The summary of effects below appears in Edward J. Laurance, "Small Arms, Light Weapons, and Conflict Prevention," in *Cases and Strategies for Preventive Action*. New York: The Century Foundation Press, 1998.

18. I am indebted to Jakki Potgieter and Virginia Gamba of the Institute for Security Studies in South Africa for this phrase.

19. The literature on acquisition modes is extensive. One of the earliest and most influential treatments is Michael J. Klare, "Light Weapons Diffusion and Global Violence in the Post-Cold War Era," in Jasjit Singh, ed., *Light Weapons and International Security*, Delhi: Indian Pugwash Society and British American Security Information Council, 1995. For a more recent treatment, see "Small Arms and Light Weapons: The Epidemic Spread of Conflicts," in *Conversion Survey 1997*, Bonn: Bonn International Center for Conversion, 1997. Chapter Three.

20. *Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms*, p. 17.

21. The United Nations Small Arms Panel included this in their consensus report, citing an earlier consensus reached in paragraph 7 of *Guidelines for International Arms Transfers in the Context of General Assembly Resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991*. United Nations Disarmament Commission Report. A/CN.10/1996/CRP.3, 3 May 1996.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 14. The source used by the panel was Virginia Hart Ezell. *Report on International Small Arms Production and Proliferation*. Alexandria, Virginia: Institute for Research on Small Arms in International Security, March 1995, p. 9.

24. *Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms*, p. 51.

25. *Guidelines for International Arms Transfers in the Context of General Assembly Resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991*. United Nations Disarmament Commission Report. A/CN.10/1996/CRP.3, 3 May 1996. Paragraph 14.

26. *Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms*, p. 17.

27. This typology was originally developed by Rachel Stohl.

28. Stephen D. Goose and Frank Smyth. "Arming Genocide in Rwanda." *Foreign Affairs* 73(September/October 1994): 86.

29. Human Rights Watch Arms Project. *Arming Rwanda: The Arms Trade and Human Rights Abuses in the Rwandan War*, January 1994.

30. Alison L. DesForges. "Making Noise Effectively: Lessons From the Rwandan Catastrophe," in Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *Vigilance and Vengeance: NGOs Preventing Ethnic Conflict in Divided Societies*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 1996, p. 219.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 223.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 221.

33. Michael Klare, "Light Weapons Diffusion and Global Violence in the Post-Cold War Era," in Jasjit Singh, ed., *Light Weapons and International Security*. Delhi: Indian Pugwash Society and British American Security Information Council, 1995, pp. 20-21.

34. Goose and Smyth, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91.

35. The Human Rights Watch Arms Project, *Rearming with Impunity: International Support for the Perpetrators of the Rwandan Genocide*. Washington, D.C., 29 May 1995.

36. "Remember Rwanda?" *Washington Post*, 24 July 1995; Peter De Jonno. "PW's 'chocolate box sailor' implicated in Rwanda arms deal," *Sunday Times*, 4 April 1995; William Branigin. "Arms Flows to Rwandans Raise Alarms," *Washington Post*, 19 July 1995; Chris McGreal. "Zaire helps rearm Hutu killers," *Guardian*, 30 May 1995; "Les Francais rearmeraient l'ancienne armée rwandaise," *Liberation*, 29 May 1995.

37. William Branigin, *op. cit.*

38. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1013, 7 September 1995.

39. *Report of the International Commission of Inquiry (Rwanda)*. United Nations, S/1996/195, 14 March 1996.

40. For a summary of these flows, see Charles J. Hanley. "From Near and Far, Weapons Trails Lead to Central Africa," *Associated Press*, 7 November 1996.

41. Alison DesForges, quoted in Stephen Buckley. "Gunmen in Camps Loom Large: Dealing With Hutus Called Unavoidable," *Washington Post*, 15 November 1996.

42. Much of this summary of the Liberian situation is based on Klare, *op. cit.*, p. 19, and *Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Liberia*. Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 1996, UNIDIR/96/32.

43. *Liberia-Humanitarian Situation Report #85*. United Nations: Department of Humanitarian Affairs, 4-17 September 1997. Internet: www.un.org/ha/

44. *Ibid.*

45. For a brief account of the light weapons problem in Somalia, see Klare, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-23.

46. The government established the Civil Defense Patrol System (PAC) under the auspices of the army in the mid-1980s, as a counterinsurgency measure. Although the name changed several times, the general term "civil patrols" is used. See Margaret L. Popkin. *Civil Patrols and Their Legacy*. Washington: The Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights, June 1996.

47. Christopher Louise. *Light Weapons Proliferation in Central America: A Preliminary Report on the Militarisation of Civil Society in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Chiapas*. Unpublished paper presented to the BASIC Workshop, Light Weapons Proliferation and Opportunities for Control. London, June 1996.

48. For a thorough treatment of the problems in South Africa see Glenn Oosthuysen. *Small Arms Proliferation and Control in Southern Africa*. Pretoria: The South African Institute of International Affairs, October 1996.

49. *Firearms in South Africa: An Escalating Problem*. Pretoria: Government of South Africa 1996, pp. 5-6.

50. "Albania: Hold Your Breath," *The Economist*, 22 March 1997.

51. Jane Perlez. "Bitter Albanians, Facing Anarchy, Arm Themselves," *New York Times*, 14 March 1997.

52. "Albania: Ready, Aim, Vote," *The Economist*, 17 May 1997.

53. Lionel Barber and Guy Dinmore. "EU Rejects Sending Troops to Albania," *Financial Times*, 17 March 1997.

54. Jane Perlez. "Anarchy of Thugs Menaces Albania," *New York Times*, 12 March 1997.

55. Daniel Williams. "Italy's Key Peacekeeping Role in Albania Raises Concerns at Home," *The Washington Post*, 7 April 1997.

56. "Drop Your Guns," *The Economist*, 9 August 1997, p. 44.

57. *Ibid.*

58. "Hope and Danger for Ethnic Albanians," *The Economist*, 29 March 1997; Chris Hedges. "Notes from the Underground on Another Balkan Rift," *New York Times*, 11 May 1997.

59. Guy Dinmore. "Mayor Jailed for 13 years After Flag Riot," *Financial Times*, 18, September 1997. London.

60. Mike O'Connor. "Albanian Village Finds Boom in Gun-Running," *New York Times*, 24 April 1997.

61. *Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms*. The details of this panel's work and its report appear throughout this report.

62. For a summary of the Mali case, see *Conversion Survey 1997*. (Bonn: Bonn International Center for Conversion, 1997, pp. 92-93).

63. *Report of the International Commission of Inquiry (Rwanda)*. United Nations. S/1996/195, 14 March 1996.

64. *Supplement to An Agenda for Peace*, op. cit.

65. *Guidelines for International Arms Transfers in the Context of General Assembly Resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991*. United Nations Disarmament Commission Report. A/CN.10/1996/CRP.3, 3 May 1996.

66. The lengthy report of the commission is found in an annex to the commission's resolution entitled *Criminal Justice Reform and Strengthening of Legal Institutions: Measures to Regulate Firearms*. E/CN.15/1997/1.19/Rev.1, 7 May, 1997. The excerpts can be found in Sarah Meek, *United Nations Report on Firearms Regulation*. Institute for Security Studies: Halfway House, South Africa, June 1997. Paper No. 23.

67. *Criminal Justice Reform and Strengthening of Legal Institutions: Measures to Regulate Firearms*, op. cit., paragraph 5.

68. In April 1988, Norway hosted a meeting designed to promote this moratorium. See Raymond Bonner, "Nations Unite to Eradicate the Plague of Small Arms," *New York Times*, 5 April 1998.

69. William Benson. "Regulatory mechanisms aimed at stemming the proliferation of light weapons." Unpublished paper distributed at the Conference on Light Weapons and Peace Building in Central and East Africa. Cape Town, 23-25 July 1997.

70. *DAC Guidelines on Conflict, Peace, and Development*. OECD Document DCD/DAC(96)31/REV3, 17 April 1997, p. ii.

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid., p. 12.

73. *Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms*, p. 15.

74. Speaking about the initiative for a moratorium on the export, import, and production of light weapons by West African states, the president of Mali, Alphan Oumar Konare, noted that the "political, economic, and social consequences of the anarchic proliferation of light weapons are well known. They are the millions of victims, most of them civilians, the displaced population with their tears and suffering, the phenomena of child soldiers, terrorism, and wide-scale banditry in urban areas. This belief in disarmament (the moratorium concept) does not proceed from idealism or from naïveté. The best strategy for prevention of armed conflict is to eliminate the means of violence." Raymond Bonner. "Nations Unite to Eradicate the Plague of Small Arms," *New York Times*, 5 April 1998.

75. Most treatments of this subject, including earlier parts of this report, lay out supply and demand factors. For the purposes of this report, the focus is on the conclusions of the panel, given that its stature and the consensus reached provide the best basis for policy action at the international level. The demand and supply factors in the text summarize the panel's findings found in paragraphs 38-49 of their report.

76. Andrei Raevsky. *Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project-Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Aspects of Psychological Operations and Intelligence*. Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 1996.

77. Howard Adelman and Susanne Schmeidl. *Early Warning Models and Networking*. Paper presented to the annual meeting of the International Studies Association. Chicago, February 1995, p. 25.

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid.

80. This assessment of the early warning process is based on Adelman and Schmeidl, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

82. In addition to the references made to this point, the extensive work of the London-based NGO, International Alert, should be noted. Several draft manuscripts sent to the author document significant strides in the direction of establishing a more effective early warning and response system. This includes the establishment in January 1997 of the Forum on Early Warning and Early Response (FEWER). FEWER is an independent and interdisciplinary consortium of academic research units, NGOs, and intergovernmental organizations—including UN agencies—set up to provide decisionmakers with information and analysis to warn on the potential for violent conflict in order to prevent its escalation.

83. See "Small Arms and Light Weapons: The Epidemic Spread of Conflicts." Chapter Three, *Conversion Survey 1997*. Bonn: Bonn International Center for Conversion, 1997.

84. "Albania: Hold Your Breath," *The Economist*, 22 March 1997.

85. For an exception see Tara Kartha, *Ammunition as a Tool for Conflict Control*. Paper presented to the BASIC Workshop on Light Weapons Proliferation and Opportunities for Control. London, June 1996.

86. Michael Lund. *Preventing Violent Conflicts*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 1996, p. 92.

87. Alison L. DesForges, *op. cit.*, pp. 213–32.

88. *Proposed Moratorium on the Importing, Exporting, and Manufacturing of Light Arms*. Bamako, Mali, March 1997.

89. *Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms*, p. 23.

90. For two basic and complementary treatments on how conflict prevention tools vary by phase of conflict, see Michael Lund, *op. cit.*, and Kalypso Nicolaidis, "International Preventive Action: Developing a Strategic Framework," in Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *Vigilance and Vengeance: NGOs Preventing Ethnic Conflict in Divided Societies*. Washington: The Brookings Institution Press, 1996, pp. 23–72. The following discussion is adapted from Edward J. Laurance, "Small Arms, Light Weapons, and Conflict Prevention," *op. cit.*

91. Lund, *op. cit.*, pp. 109–13.

92. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

93. *Ibid.*, pp. 148–51, Table 4.1.

94. *Ibid.*, p. 141.

95. For a summary of the literature on "ripeness," see Lund, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

96. For a thorough assessment of the arms flows to Burundi, see *Stoking the Fires: Military Assistance and Arms Trafficking in Burundi*, (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1997).

97. Government of South Africa. *Firearms in South Africa: An Escalating Problem*. Presentation made to the United Nations Workshop on Small Arms, Pretoria, 24 September 1996.

98. Juanita Darling. "Gun-Swap Project Overwhelmed by Response in War-Weary Land," *Los Angeles Times*, 5 October 1996.

99. To the extent that other regional organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) are conducting "peace" operations, many of these suggestions could apply to them as well.

100. Virginia Gamba and Jakkie Potgeiter. "Concluding Summary: Multinational Peace Operations and the Enforcement of Consensual Disarmament," in *Managing Arms in Peace Processes: The Issues*. Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 1996, pp. 214–15.

101. Tom Hundley. "GIs in Bosnia Face New Tensions," *Chicago Tribune*, 24 November 1996.

102. General George Joulwan. Address to Council on Foreign Relations, New York. December 1996.

103. *Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform*. New York: The United Nations, 14 July 1997. Document #A/51/950, pp. 40–41.

104. All of the recommendations of the panel are found on pp. 21–24 of *Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms*.

105. For a discussion of this policy tool, see John Stremlau, *Sharpening International Sanctions: Toward a Stronger Role for the United Nations*. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, November 1996.

106. Lund, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

107. Ezell, *Report on International Small Arms Production*, op. cit. (see note 23).

108. The author was also a consultant to the two panels that developed the UN Register of Conventional Arms.

109. I am indebted to the anonymous reviewer who eloquently made the case for better theory on the role of arms in the outbreak of violence.

110. These principles also appear in Edward J. Laurance, "Small Arms, Light Weapons, and Conflict Prevention," op. cit.

111. Frank Millar. "Debate on Arms Needs 'Injection of Reality,'" *Irish Times*, 18 November 1996.

112. See The Preparatory Committee for a Global Campaign on Small Arms and Light Weapons (www.prepcom.org)

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